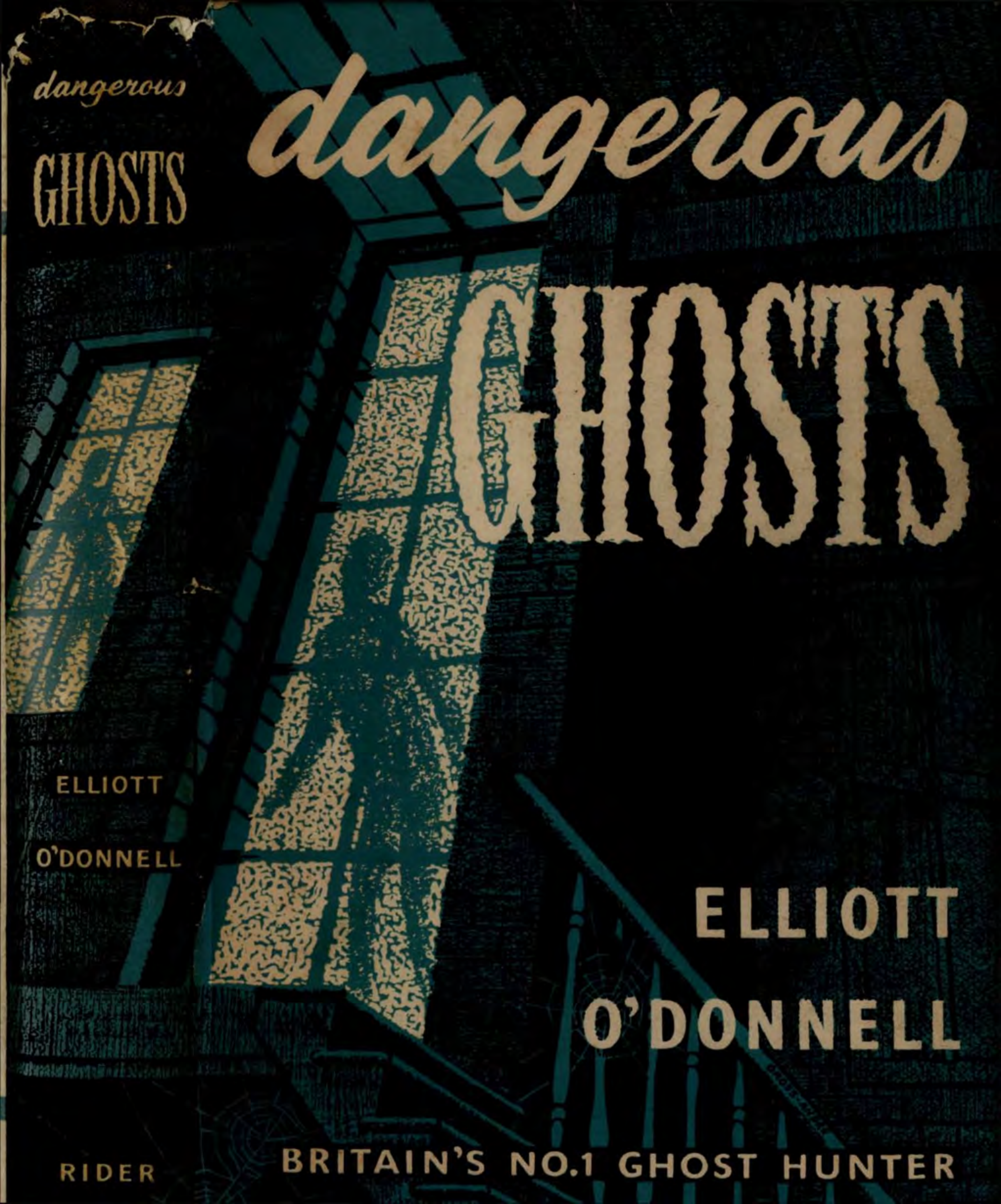

dangerous
GHOSTS
ELLIOTT
O'DONNELL
RIDER
dangerous
GHOSTS
ELLIOTT
O'DONNELL
BRITAIN'S NO.1 GHOST HUNTER

DANGEROUS GHOSTS

Ghosts are not generally supposed to be dangerous ; but here the author shows that such a supposition is quite erroneous. There are invisible, intangible, nameless forces and influences which threaten human sanity and morals. Some ghosts are violent and endanger life and limb.

Here we read of houses with vampirish, supernatural entities that suck the vitality of people who encounter them ; staircases and corridors of dread ; attics and cellars haunted by terrifying apparitions ; crossroads haunted by the familiars of witches and the ghosts of criminals ; woods and trees that harbour spirits inimical to human beings and animals ; hoodoo and cursed places and people ; poltergeists that hurl things at people ; phantoms of lovely women that lure men to danger and death ; possessing and obsessing spirits.

The hauntings are not confined to one country, they are widespread, and include places in Great Britain, Eire, the Dominions, and foreign lands.



From "The New Mysteries of London"
(*Illustration by PHIZ*)

DANGEROUS GHOSTS

by

ELLIOTT O'DONNELL

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PREFACE

The contents of this volume are very comprehensive; they include a great variety of ghostly phenomena that are physically, mentally and morally dangerous.

Wherever possible the source of my authority is stated.

THE UNSEEN DANGER

THE worst hauntings are often those in which nothing is visualized and only sensed; where atmospheres harbour baleful forces and influences that are of deadly danger to the morality, mentality and even life of the people who experience them.

Such forces and influences may be supernatural, or may be due to the strong emotional thoughts of people long dead or still living.

It is conceivable that not only the atmosphere but the walls and furniture of a house may become impregnated for an indefinite period with thoughts and vibrations, and under certain at present unknown conditions give out a kind of aura which affects people endowed with a peculiarly sensitive and receptive mentality; that is to say, people known to psychical researchers as sensitives.

Dr. Luys, an eminent French scientist, and Professor d'Arsonval have agreed that such a theory is feasible.

Sensitives may be conscious of the evil in a house directly they enter it, or they may live in it for a considerable time without being in the least degree aware of the effect that the evil in the atmosphere, walls, or furniture is having on them. Individuals with a natural proclivity to evil are of course the most likely to be affected by a baleful atmosphere, but not infrequently it requires a supreme effort on the part of good people to remain unaffected by such an atmosphere.

An instance of this is recorded in the memoirs of Bishop MacIlwaine, a well-known American prelate.[1] It happened in 1869, when he was staying in his father's house in New Jersey.

> "I made a rule," he writes, "of going each evening at the setting of the sun to my chamber for prayer. One afternoon, as that time approached, I was sitting in the parlour with some company that had just come in. Presently I said to myself, 'The sun is going down, go to your room.' I waited for a very short time, and was conscious that, as I waited, the disposition to go decreased. I said to myself, 'I had better go at once,' and rose and went. I had no sooner got out of the parlour into the hall, whence I was to ascend the staircase, ere an indescribable dread came over me, as if some mysterious agency of terror was

[1] *The Wonder Gatherer*, edited by Jessie Young.

resisting me. I began the ascent by force. I took hold of the banister and dragged myself up. By the time I had reached the first landing (my room was on the second story) I was so overpowered with dread that I stopped. I did not dare to go any further. All I knew was that something, some power, some darkness, some unutterable dread was upon me and before me.

"I pondered for a moment and then went on to the head of the stairs. There I stood again and thought whether I dared go on. My room was at the end of a passage. I pushed forward, and got hold of the handle of the door. The dread increased. It seemed a horror of darkness. I stood for a moment deliberating whether I dared open the door. I opened it and rushed to the chair at which I was accustomed to kneel. At the opposite side of the room I knelt, and in a few broken sentences prayed two or three times, looking behind me, as if I expected to see some being there. Directly I got up, all my dread ceased. I was drenched with perspiration, my limbs shook, my nerves were thoroughly shaken, and all the next day the physical effect was upon me. For thirty-six hours my nerves did not recover. I was in good health and spirits prior to this most unpleasant experience. Nothing of the sort had ever happened to me before, and I have never again had a similar experience. I am sure that my dread and intense horror were due to the presence in the house of a diabolical spirit."

It is easy to be sceptical and say the good bishop was at the time in a low state of nerves, and the victim of a very morbid and harrowing imagination. But he asserts that he was in good spirits and in a normal state of health.

One can only of course theorize as to what was the cause of his strange experience. Rejecting an explanation on natural grounds, it might possibly have been due, as he believed, to the presence of a Satanic spirit in the house, or, the conditions being right, to contact with the harboured thoughts of a former very wicked occupant of the house. Either theory seems to me to be equally applicable.

Another authentic case of an invisible, intangible evil something in the atmosphere of a room occurred some years ago in Ireland.

Student after student who slept in a room in a well-known Roman Catholic college either cut his throat or threw himself out of the window. One student, after staying one night in the room, asked the Principal of the college to give him another room,

and declared that if he remained any longer in the room he would commit suicide. He said that directly he entered the room he felt singularly depressed, and that every now and then he experienced a strong urge to kill himself. It was only by the exertion of great will-power that he refrained.

His emphatic assertion that the atmosphere of the room was impregnated with evil impressed the authorities of the college to such a degree that he was transferred to other quarters at once, and the room in which he had such an unpleasant experience was forthwith kept permanently sealed.

It will probably be argued that the desire on the part of the student to destroy himself was due to his having been told about the suicides, but the college authorities seem to have taken particular care that the student should not be told about them, and when he was subsequently interrogated he asserted that he had never heard of them.

Could the highly emotional thoughts of the first suicide in the room have become embedded in the room, and produced a kind of aura capable of being transmitted to persons who occupied the room subsequently, even afflicting them with the same mental sufferings and imparting to them the same desire to kill themselves?

Such a theory seems to me to be quite feasible. But what caused the first suicide in the room? Was it the mere desire of a former occupant of the room to do away with himself; was the dead prompted by an evil spirit attracted in some curious way to the college; or had he harboured a suicidal tendency before he came to the college?

If the other suicides were merely imitative and not due to his transmitted thoughts, one must assume that the self-killers all had a previous proclivity to suicide. Such a thing is hardly probable.

A similarly haunted room is mentioned by Dr. Nichols in his book *Supramundane Facts in the Life of the Rev. J. B. Fergusson.* He writes thus:

> "A lady of my acquaintance became suddenly very unhappy by the simple fact of having gone to live in a house which was really quite pleasant and convenient, and the feeling of moral depression, which invaded her, attained an excessive degree, when she went into the best room of the house. If she persisted in remaining there she felt an irresistible impulse to throw herself

out of the window. On the other hand, as soon as she went out and got into the street, the sentiment of depression, with its sombre thoughts and impulses towards suicide, disappeared entirely, to return at once when she went indoors. Under such an obsession the lady had to remove to another house.

"I was informed of the fact," Dr. Nichols continues, "and desirous of clearing up the mystery, I started an enquiry concerning the previous inhabitants of the dwelling. It was not long before I found out that it had been occupied by a gentleman whose wife, afflicted with suicidal mania, had thrown herself head first from the window of the best room, and was killed on the spot."

Dr. Nichols wonders if the emotional thoughts of the lady who committed suicide could have produced an aura sufficiently strong to be transmitted to the lady who left the house owing to the suicidal urge which she experienced when in the best room.

A certain spot on the Durdham Downs overlooking the Avon Gorge at Clifton, Bristol, has witnessed many suicides. Why this particular spot has been selected for a plunge to death is a mystery. There is nothing remarkable about it; nothing to distinguish it in any way from other spots on the cliffs. It cannot be merely the fascination of height, because other spots on the cliffs are equally elevated, if not higher.

The imitation theory might account for some of the deaths but not all, since some of the self-destroyers have been strangers in the district; they had never been on the Durdham Downs prior to putting an end to themselves, and even if they had heard of the suicides could hardly have located the fatal spot without guidance. But who or what guided them? So far as was known no living person. What, then?

It was in the hope of getting a clue to the mystery that I stayed a night at the suicide spot on the Downs one late summer evening four years ago. I had with me a friend from London. The Downs are a favourite evening resort in the summer for Bristolians, and up to nearly midnight there were cars along the road skirting the cliffs and loving couples sitting under the trees. After midnight the Downs became lonely and deserted, peopled only by the dark shadows of the trees and bushes.

The silence was eerie. As the minutes passed, the sense of solitude and desertion intensified. A little after two o'clock my

friend declared that he did not feel able to remain there any longer, so we came away.

We did not see or hear anything supernatural during our vigil but we sensed a very subtle, evil, magnetically attractive presence in the atmosphere, and could well understand that it might prove extremely harmful and even dangerous to some people.

In the case of the haunted cell in the Fourth Precinct Police Station of New Orleans, in which an old woman named Ann Murphy had hanged herself, it was definitely proved that several suicides which occurred in the cell after her death were instigated by her ghost.[1] What prompted Ann Murphy to hang herself was apparently never ascertained. She was not known to have evinced any suicidal tendency prior to her occupying the cell, or while she was in it. Although no tragedy had occurred in the cell before Ann Murphy's advent to it, it was rumoured to have been haunted for a long time, so that it was quite possible her suicide was due to the prompting of some very evil supernatural entity.

In some houses there is an indefinable, mysterious something in the atmosphere that endangers the morals; in others a something that endangers the mentality; and in others a something that endangers the morality and mentality. Maybe it is the lingering, harboured thoughts of a former occupant, or very possibly an invisible spirit entity.

In a flat in a house in a street adjoining Berkeley Square tenant after tenant took to drink; in a flat in a neighbouring street tenant after tenant was cited as a co-respondent in a divorce suit.

Some people with whom I was acquainted when I lived in London took an unfurnished flat near Shepherd's Market. There was nothing apparently wrong with it. It was on the first floor and self-contained; the rooms, which had been redecorated, were bright and of a fair size; there were up-to-date conveniences. The other people in the building did not disturb them, they seemed quite harmless and inoffensive, and yet they were far from happy in the flat. They felt a corruptive, seductive influence in the atmosphere, and they constantly had the most unpleasant and revolting dreams. Although they never saw or heard anything of a ghostly nature they felt sure that the flat was very badly haunted.

Their aversion to it increased to such an extent that they left it, long before their lease had expired. Their curiosity regarding

[1] Vide the *New Orleans Times*, November, 1872.

the history of the house led to them making enquiries in the neighbourhood, and they learned that it had formerly been a brothel. Possibly their very unpleasant experience in the flat was due to the lingering, affecting thoughts of the keeper and frequenters of the brothel; or possibly the flat was actually haunted by the earthbound spirit of someone closely associated with the brothel.

I had a similar experience in an apartment house in Moscow Road, London, and have no doubt that had I made enquiries as to the past history of the house, I should have discovered that it had once been of ill fame.

It is always advisable to learn something about the history of a flat or house before occupying it, in case of lurking danger in the atmosphere.

THE MENACE OF BLACKNESS

IN THE previous chapter I have alluded to hauntings by an invisible, intangible force or influence in a house or place that endangers the mentality. I heard of such a haunting when I was a student in Dublin.

A relative of mine told me that there was a very badly haunted room in a house near the Waterloo Road. He said that people who occupied the room for any length of time invariably became partially or entirely demented.

He slept in the room for three successive nights and refused to remain in it any longer. He said that he found the room horribly depressing, and that whenever he slept he had the most harassing and worrying dreams.

The following account of a haunting which was well calculated to affect the mentality of any nervous person is related by Mr. J. Westwood in *Notes and Queries*:[1]

> "In a lonely neighbourhood, on the verge of Enfield Chace, stands an old house much beaten by wind and weather. It was inhabited, when I knew it, by two elderly people, maiden sisters, with whom I had some acquaintance, and who once invited me to dine with them and meet a circle of local guests.
>
> "I well remember my walk thither. It led me up a steep

[1] April 5, 1873.

ascent of oak avenue, opening out at the top on what was called the Ridge-road of the Chace. It was the close of a splendid autumn afternoon; the year was dying with more than its usual pomp, 'wrapping itself in its gorgeous robes, like a grand Caesar'. On reaching my destination the sun had already dipped below the horizon, and the eastern front of the house projected an eerie black shadow at its foot. I crossed the threshold with repugnance. Having some changes to make in my attire, a servant led me to an upper room, where she left me.

"No sooner had she gone than I became conscious of a peculiar sound in the room, a sort of shuddering sound, as of suppressed dread. It seemed close to me. I gave little heed to it at first, setting it down for the wind in the chimney or a draught from the half-open door, but, moving about the room, I perceived that the sound moved with me. Whichever way I turned it followed me. I went to the furthest extremity of the room—it was there also.

"Beginning to feel uneasy and being quite unable to account for the singularity, I completed my toilet in haste and descended to the drawing-room, hoping that I should leave the uncomfortable sound behind me—but not so. It was on the landing, on the stairs; it went down with me, always the same sound of shuddering horror, faint but audible, and always close at hand. Even at the dinner table, when the conversation flagged, I heard it unmistakably several times, and so near that, if there were an entity connected with it, we were two on one chair. It seemed to be noticed by nobody else, but it ended by harassing and distressing me, and I was relieved to think that I had not to sleep in the house that night.

"At an early hour, several of the guests having far to go, the party broke up, and it was a satisfaction to me to breathe the fresh, wholesome air of the night and feel rid at last of my shuddering incubus.

"When I met my hosts again it was under another and unhaunted roof. On my telling them what had occurred to me, they smiled and said that it was perfectly true, but added that they were so used to the sound that it had ceased to perturb them. Sometimes, they said, it would be quiet for weeks; at other times it followed them from room to room, from floor to floor, pertinaciously, as it had followed me. They could give no explanation of the phenomenon."

Of what strange horror, not ended with life but perpetuated in the limbo of invisible things, was that sound the exponent?

Although this haunting was less dangerous perhaps than the other hauntings that I have mentioned, it was, as I have suggested, quite capable of being harmful to very nervous and impressionable people. To what category of ghostly phenomena this particular phenomenon belongs no one can rightly say, but it suggests to me the ever-restless, unhappy spirit of some poor wretch, earth-bound, on account of the kind of life that he had led when in the flesh and blood. The fact that Mr. Westwood's experience was so well corroborated hardly admits an explanation of it on hallucinatory grounds.

A very unpleasant supernatural phenomenon, and one which might easily prove detrimental to the soundest mentality, is the black pall or haze. A haunting of this description occurred in the family of my old nurse, always prior to a death.

She said that she was lying awake one night, trying in vain to go to sleep, when she was conscious suddenly of something very dreadful in the room. She summoned up courage to light the candle, which was on the chair by the side of the bed. She saw nothing. The door of the room was closed, and the chair, which she had placed against it to prevent it opening—there was no lock—was still there. As she was peering ahead of her, limb-tied and tongue-tied, the empty space between her and the wall facing her suddenly became infused in a sepulchral blackness that was menacing and horrible.

My old nurse had the faculty of smelling death, a faculty not uncommon in some parts of England. She smelt its presence now, and she knew that it presaged either her death or the death of someone very dear to her. She was so frightened that she fainted. When she recovered consciousness and ventured to look around her she no longer smelt death, and the horrible phenomenal blackness had gone. The following day she received a telegram saying that her mother had been seized with a heart attack and had died during the night.

Phenomenal blackness is not uncommon as a form of warning. In a book entitled *Ghostly Visitors*[1] Mr. Walford, an Oxford undergraduate, says:

[1] *Spectre Stricken.* All accounts of ghostly phenomena in this book are said to be true.

"There is a ghost at —— Hospital in London. A cousin of mine is a medical student there, and he told me that he knew when the patient operated upon was going to die, as he always saw a black shade when in the operating ward."

When I lived in St. Ives, Cornwall, an old inhabitant of that town told me that he and a friend were on the Castle-an-Dinas hilltop late one summer evening, when they both saw a pall-like black haze appear over the broken rocks in front of them. There was something so ominous and sinister about it that they were frightened. It vanished as suddenly and mysteriously as it had come, and they were quite unable to account for it.

A day or two later the friend received tidings of the death of his twin brother. He had died just about the time the black haze had appeared on the hilltop.

It is difficult to find any satisfactory explanation in these cases of pall-blackness other than the supernatural.

The lonely moors and hills that constitute the hinterland of St. Ives are much haunted, not only by the ghosts of old-world people but by elementals, as grotesque in appearance as are the fantastically fashioned rocks and boulders amid which they prowl and glide at night.

THE MENACE OF THE INDEFINABLE

THERE are recorded cases in which a haunting by an indefinable *Something* in a house or place has been constitutionally dangerous, wrecking the health and even causing death. An instance of a house harbouring a supernatural phenomenon of this kind was reported in the Press in December, 1919.

Tenant after tenant died suddenly in a house in a street in Croydon, or quitted it hurriedly, and, as a consequentce, he house acquired such a sinister reputation that no one cared to inhabit it. For years it stood empty. Children hastened past it after nightfall; dogs were never seen to enter the garden. Yet no one seemed to know what exactly was wrong with the house; whether it was the drains, although there had never been any complaint about them, or rats, or whether the house was haunted.

In appearance it was just like any other house in the street; from its exterior there was nothing to suggest that it contained

anything supernatural and horrible. Yet no one had lived in it for long; they had either died or fled.

A newspaper man who heard about it determined to spend a night there and probe the mystery of the hidden, nameless danger to the core.

There were a few pieces of furniture in the house, and he sat in a very dilapidated armchair in a room on the ground floor. Shortly after midnight a feeling of sickness came over him and he was conscious of something, void of any definite shape and indescribably loathsome, entering the room through the closed door. He felt it getting nearer and nearer to him until it finally enveloped him, when he fainted. On recovering consciousness he could no longer feel the foul presence in the room. The horror that it had inspired was so great, however, that he lost no time in getting out of the house. He had been in excellent health prior to his vigil in the house, but the shock he experienced that night was so terrible that he became seriously ill and died within a fortnight.

I did not see the newspaper accounts of his experience until a long time after its occurrence, and when I made enquiries about the house I was informed that it had been demolished.

People who are sceptical regarding the existence of supernatural phenomena will no doubt suggest that the unfortunate journalist was paranoiac and the victim of a sensorial illusion; they will say that he knew the reputation of the house, and that a long solitary vigil in the dark very probably excited his imagination and made him believe that he actually sensed a presence in the room. But could mere imagination or illusion create a shock sufficiently strong to cause the death of a young man asserted to be in excellent health?

In an old issue of *Notes and Queries*[1] there is a strange story of an encounter with an indefinable dangerous supernatural phenomenon in Somersetshire.

During the year 1840 Mr. T. stayed for several months in Taunton. While he was there he became very friendly with Mr. S., a bluff, genial fox-hunter, who told him a very unusual story of haunting in Somersetshire. Mr. S. said that when he returned home from the local hunt after dark he often observed a central window in an old mansion, not far from the roadside, strangely illuminated. All the other windows were dark, but in this particular window a wan, dreary light was visible. As he knew that no one was living in

[1] Vide *Haunted Homes and Family Legends*, by J. H. Ingram.

Sensorial illusions, technically speaking, are not mental delusions; they only become so when they are believed to be realities. So, in this case, if the fox-hunting squires were the victims of sensorial illusions, they were mad, since they were convinced that the sensations that they experienced were real. But they were not mad. They were jolly, hearty, healthy sporting hunters. Consequently the sensations which they experienced simultaneously were not illusions but were due to some mysterious natural cause, or to the presence in the room of an invisible, intangible, vampiric supernatural force or entity. The eerie, phenomenal light in the room makes the latter explanation, in my opinion, rather the more feasible.

HOODOO

John Aubrey, in his book *Miscellanies*, mentions the following houses that were reputed to be very unlucky in his time:

The Fleece Tavern in Covent Garden was very unlucky for homicides. A handsome brick house on the south side of Clerkenwell Churchyard had been so unlucky for at least forty years that nobody would venture to occupy it. No one who lived in an attractive house in Holborn ever prospered.

No third generation of a family ever remained in the Charter House on the Mendips in Somerset, or in the Manor of Butleigh near Glastonbury.

At the present time there is a house not far from Rugby which has always proved unlucky to every family that lived in it; and in an isolated spot near Caterham there is an early 18th-century house reputed to be so hoodoo that none of the local people care to pass by it alone after nightfall. It came into notice shortly before the Second World War, owing to the deaths of its owner and his wife, who were found dead in a car in the garage. There were no marks of injury on their bodies, and it was thought, but never definitely proved, that they had been poisoned by carbon monoxide. An elderly man, who had lived in the neighbourhood of Caterham for many years, told a representative of the Bristol Press that bad luck in some form or other always overtook everyone who occupied the old house.[1]

A picturesque old farmhouse in a village in Caithness acquired

[1] May, 1932.

a sinister reputation in the twenties of the present century, owing to three tragedies that occurred in it during twelve years. One owner of the house shot himself. Another owner of the house was murdered. After the third tragedy the house was said to be haunted by an invisible evil spirit that urged people to commit suicide or murder. No one ventured into the grounds of the house alone when it began to get dusk. Dogs would not go near the place; and horses shied and bolted if made to pass it.

A house in a suburb of Birmingham bore a very ominous reputation for many years. No murder or suicide was known to have taken place in it but it had witnessed a number of other tragedies. The following were a few of them:

A lady descending a staircase in the house one day tripped over something that she could not see, fell, and sustained such internal injuries that she eventually died. Within a few months after her death a servant belonging to the establishment severed an artery, while chopping sticks for the kitchen fire, and died before a doctor arrived. A year afterwards a boy threw a stone at the house. It broke a window. A piece of glass struck a little girl in the face. It did not kill her but she lost the sight of one eye.

Not long afterwards the brother of the little girl fell out of the nursery window, and was fatally injured. So evil a reputation did the house acquire, in consequence of these calamities, that no one would inhabit it, and it was ultimately demolished.

Some houses look ominous. An old isolated house that was not very far from Warwick gave one that impression. It was a stately, sombre building, half hidden by trees, half classic, with a large ornate Tudor porch that contrasted oddly with the windows, which belonged to different periods, some of them Tudor and others dating from the days of Dutch William. The house had a malign, unhappy air and looked haunted; and so it was, but by no visible ghost.

It was just an unlucky house, a house that engendered misfortune on whoever inhabited it. No one knew why. So far as was known it had witnessed no grave tragedy, nor had any curse ever been pronounced on it. Yet the moment a sensitive crossed the threshold he experienced a forebodement and sensed a harboured, supernatural, harassing element in the atmosphere.

Some of the occupants of the house became bankrupt; others had very unhappy marriages. Loved ones died in the house under very distressing circumstances. No one ever lived tranquilly in

the house. In the end it was pulled down, mainly because it was so unlucky.[1]

There is a corner in a room in a Mayfair men's club that is hoodoo, owing to the fact that members who have sat in it have invariably died soon afterwards. Even on fine, bright, warm summer days the light in that particular corner is always subdued and there is a chilly feeling in the air. No satisfactory explanation of the blight which envelops the corner has ever been found.

Hoodoo is not confined to buildings; there are hoodoo roads, woods, pools and outdoor places of all kinds.

There is a hoodoo corner of a road not fifty miles from Northampton. It inspires an ominous feeling even in pedestrians who pass it in broad daylight. No tragedy, nothing grim or awful, is known to have ever occurred at or near the corner to account for its being hoodoo. Yet it is thought to be very unlucky.

There are hoodoo cars and trains, and in the old days there were hoodoo hansoms and four-wheelers. I remember hearing about a London hansom which no man cared to drive on account of the number of accidents it had experienced; and a four-wheeler that bore a similar reputation.

The car in which Francis Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated at Sarajevo was regarded by the peasants as bewitched.[2] During the 1914 War it was kept in a Viennese museum. When peace was declared it was bought by the Jugoslav Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He incurred so many accidents when in it that he sold it.

The man who bought it was found dead in a ditch one day, with the car, unharmed, close to him. Mr. Tiber Hirschfield was the next person to own it. He was taking six friends to a wedding one day, when it collided with another car, which it was trying to pass at a great speed. No one was killed but everyone was badly bruised and shaken. Mr. Hirschfield tried to sell it, but it had acquired such a hoodoo reputation that no one would buy it, so he destroyed it.

In 1928 the 1.20 G.W.R. train from Newton Abbot to Paddington was regarded as an unlucky train, on account of the number of fatalities associated with it.[3] Mr. J. Hubber, of Newton Abbot, who drove it from that place to London, was taken ill when the

[1] In the twenties of the present century.
[2] *Morning Post*, October 27, 1926.
[3] *Morning Post*, November 14, 1928.

train was travelling at express speed. He was removed to a waiting-room at Exeter Station, where he died ten minutes later. A few months previously Fireman Powlessland died as the train steamed into Paddington; and in November, 1927, Fireman Walters was killed while getting the engine of the train ready for starting.

Three fatalities in twelve months! It was little wonder that the train acquired an ill-omened reputation. It was known as the ghost train.

Hoodoo ships are far too numerous to include in this chapter.

Places that have been cursed are often hoodoo, but why places and things that are not associated with any curse or any known satanical acts, deeds or transactions should be extremely unlucky is a seemingly insoluble mystery.

THE CANDLE

I AM indebted to Mrs. Graham, who heard me give a talk on Ghostly Phenomena at a club in London, one evening in the twenties of the present century, for the following story:

"When I was a girl," she said, "some friends of ours named Holkett lived in a house in Warwickshire.[1] On account of the rumours that it was haunted, Lady Holkett experienced great difficulty in obtaining servants. From the appearance of the house one might have imagined that there was truth in the rumours. It certainly looked haunted. It was a large, low, rambling, picturesque old grey stone building, nestling between stately elm trees. A massive front door opened into a great hall, in the centre of which was a broad oak staircase, leading to a gallery that connected the two wings of the building. There were family portraits and ancient weapons on the walls of the hall, and armour and old china in every available corner. No matter how fine and sunny the day, the house was cold and gloomy. I often wondered how Lady Holkett could live there and always seem to be so bright and happy."

She told me that nothing would induce her to leave the house that had harboured so many generations of her family, and in which she had spent some of the happiest moments of her life. She loved company and was seldom without visitors.

"I can only remember her as a widow, her husband, an officer in a Highland regiment, having died in India before I was born.

[1] By request the names in this story are fictitious.

She had two daughters, Alice and Margaret, tall, good-looking girls, older than I. We were great friends, and they constantly invited me to their home; in the summer to croquet and lawn tennis; in the winter to balls and indoor games.

"Lady Holkett was very fond of cards, and she and my mother used frequently to play bezique and cribbage, whilst the girls and I indulged in something rather more frivolous. On these occasions the carriage always came for us at ten o'clock. When there was a ball Lady Holkett very kindly put us up for the night.

"I shall never forget the last time I went to a dance at the house. My mother, who had not been very well for some weeks, was unable to go to the dance; and my Aunt Norah, who was staying with us, accompanied me. It was snowing when we set out, and as it snowed all through the night and most of the next day, the roads were completely blocked, and we were forced to stay with the Holketts until the snow was cleared away.

"My aunt and I did not share a room. She slept in the east wing of the house, where all the other visitors, some of whom were belated like ourselves, slept; and as there was no room for me in that wing, I was given a room in the west wing. My room was the only occupied one in the wing.

"Nothing at all disturbing happened until the night before we returned home. Margaret and I were ascending the hall staircase to bed, when Alice met us, looking extremely agitated.

" 'Do come to my room,' she said. 'Something has happened to Mary.' Mary was one of the housemaids.

"Wondering what on earth was the matter, we accompanied Alice to her room, and on entering it, found Mary seated on a chair, sobbing hysterically. One had only to glance at the girl to see that she was suffering from a very severe shock. Though normally a very rosy, stolid, healthy girl, she was now without a vestige of colour, the pupils of her eyes were dilated with terror, and her whole body, from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet, shook as if with ague.

" 'Why, Mary,' Margaret exclaimed, 'whatever is the matter? What has happened?'

" 'It's the candle in Miss Trevor's room, miss,' the girl gasped. 'I can't put it out.'

" 'You can't put it out? Why, what nonsense!' Margaret exclaimed. 'Are you mad?'

" 'It's as true as I sit here, miss,' Mary panted. 'I put the

candle on the mantelpiece, while I set the room to rights, and when I had finished and tried to blow it out, I wasn't able to. I blew and blew and blew, till I was exhausted, and then I became scared, miss, horribly scared,' and she buried her face in her hands and shuddered. 'I've never been frightened like this before, miss, and I've come away and left the candle burning.'

" 'How absurd of you!" Margaret scolded. 'We must go and put it out at once. I've a good mind to make you come with us, Mary. For goodness' sake stop crying, or everyone in the house will hear you.'

"Margaret, Alice and I went to Miss Trevor's room, and through the open doorway we saw a lighted candle on the mantelshelf, just as Mary had described. Before we had time to cross the threshold of the room, the door closed with a bang, and there was no perceptible draught. We all in turn tried to open the door and failed. We could not move it. We rested for a few moments, and then tried again. I was pushing with all my might, when the door flew open, and I fell inside the room. The door closed immediately, and I was alone in the room.

"Alice and Margaret tried in vain to open the door, and kept banging on it and imploring me to tell them what was happening. I was too shaken and tongue-tied to reply.

"Though I saw nothing but the candle, the light of which, I thought, was peculiarly white and vibrating, I felt something menacing and horrible was in the room. It was in the atmosphere, the walls and the furniture. It surrounded me on all sides. An intangible, invisible, evil something that intended to overwhelm and crush me.

"I thought it emanated from the candle, and I felt that if I could only succeed in extinguishing the light I should rid the room of it. I got up from the floor, walked to the candle, and blew. Again and again I blew. The candle still burned, burned with the same peculiar white light. I felt that it was mocking me.

"I panicked and ran to a far corner of the room, anywhere to get away from the candle. I felt it coming stealthily after me, drawing closer and closer. Then there was a blank.

"I was conscious of nothing until I found myself in Margaret's room, with half a dozen people gathered round me. Alice told me that when she and Margaret succeeded in opening the door of Miss Trevor's room they found me, looking very dazed, lying on the floor. The candle was still alight on the mantelshelf. Lady

Holkett experienced no difficulty in blowing it out. She would not hear of me staying alone any longer in the west wing, and a room was found for me in the east wing of the house. The following morning my aunt and I returned home. We found my mother in a very critical condition. She died that evening.

"There are various superstitions in Scotland regarding candles, and I have often wondered if my curious experience with the candle in the Holketts' house was a portent of my mother's death; it occurred just about the time that she was taken so seriously ill."

This concluded Mrs. Graham's story. I have compiled it from the notes which I took at the time that it was told me.

Mrs. Graham's sister told me that she took a house in Manchester which had a very unlucky staircase. People from no apparent cause were constantly falling down the staircase. The climax came after the death of an aged lady who had been staying there. The undertaker's men, who came for the coffin on the day of the old lady's funeral, were warned about the staircase, but in spite of their caution they stumbled in some mysterious manner and fell when they were descending the staircase with the coffin. Fortunately they were not seriously injured, but the accident was of such a distressing nature that Mrs. Graham's sister, fearful lest anything more alarming might happen, vacated the house long before the termination of the lease. She subsequently learned that no one ever stayed in the house for very long.

HOUSES OF DREAD IN GREAT BRITAIN

THE PHANTOM APE OF HAMPSTEAD

Mrs. James, a reader of my books, told me, when I was living in London, an extraordinary story of Mr. Ward, one of her girlhood friends, who was haunted by a phantom ape.

Mr. Ward was on a hunting and exploring expedition in a jungle in Sumatra. One day he accidentally shot a pig-tailed macaque. It belonged to a Batak woman who was reputed to be a sorceress. She cursed him and said that he would always be haunted by something far more terrifying than anything in this world. He tried to appease her but without avail.

She spat at him when he offered her money and threatened to kill him if he did not leave the neighbourhood at once.

Soon after his encounter with her he was mauled by a wounded tiger. He had hardly recovered from his injuries when he incurred blood poisoning from the bite or sting of a venomous insect. He was so ill that he had to leave Sumatra and return to London. He had not been many days in his flat in Hampstead when he told one of his friends that he was haunted by a phantom ape that came to his bedroom every night and made hideous faces at him.

His friend thought that he must be paranoiac and advised him to see a doctor. This he would not do. At his earnest request his friend and a Roman Catholic priest stayed one night in his flat. They kept watch in the dark outside his room after he had gone to bed. Between one and two o'clock Ward screamed. They sprang from their chairs and rushed into his room. The priest crossed himself and uttered a prayer. Ward was unconscious.

"You believe me now, don't you?" he said, when he had recovered sufficiently to speak.

"I do," his friend replied, "although I saw nothing. Father David would not have been so startled and have prayed like he did unless something very terrible was in the room."

"Something very terrible was in the room," Father David said. He was ghastly pale and trembling. "I saw it very distinctly. It was simian just like you described it, Mr. Ward, and very diabolical. It vanished directly I prayed. It won't trouble you again." He knelt down and prayed and sprinkled the floor with the holy water which he had brought with him.

He proved to be a true prophet. The Batak woman's curse was no longer effective. The phantom ape never again molested Ward.

A CARDIFF HAUNTING

BEFORE the First World War Mr. Moor, who was visiting friends of mine in Upper Norwood, where I was then living, told me several strange stories of ghostly happenings in Wales.

One of his stories was about a house in Cardiff. He was invited to spend Christmas in the house, which was then occupied by a family named Webb. The house was old and had stood empty for a considerable time when the Webbs took it.

They had heard rumours that it was haunted but as they did not believe in the supernatural, they ridiculed the idea.

Nothing occurred to justify the rumours until Mr. Moor visited them.

They were all sitting in the drawing-room one evening when there was a rap, as if with knuckles, on the door. Wondering who it could be, as the cook and the two maids were out, Mona Webb, the eldest daughter, got out of her chair before the fire and opened the door. The hall was lighted with gas. As she glanced around the hall she heard steps ascending the staircase leading from the first landing to the floor above it. She at once ran upstairs and searched all the rooms, but found no one.

A few days later Mr. Moor went to his bedroom after luncheon to enjoy a quiet read and smoke. He lit the gas-fire, placed an arm-chair in front of it, and sat down. The chair was already occupied. He sprang up instantly and looked in terror at the chair. No visible being was in it. Summoning up courage he sat down again, to experience the same sensation of sitting on someone or something that was already in the chair. He decided to read and smoke in the company of beings whom he knew and could see, so he joined Mr. Webb and Arthur, the youngest son, in the dining-room. Robert, the eldest boy, was at Sandhurst.

Mrs. Webb was the next member of the household to experience the haunting. She was alone one afternoon in the house, when she fancied that she heard someone in the hall. She ran to the door of the drawing-room, where she had been sitting, and peered out. She was just in time to see a bony, hairy leg disappear round a

bend in the staircase. She was so terrified that she quickly drew back and remained locked in the drawing-room until Mr. Webb and Arthur came home. They searched the house but could find no one. Not a word was said to the servants, who came in later, lest they should be scared and give notice to leave.

On another occasion Mr. Moor and the Webbs were sitting in the drawing-room after dinner when they heard a succession of bumps overhead. Lorna, the second eldest daughter, went to the door and beckoned to the others. They all came to the open door and listened.

Presently something appeared round the bend of the staircase. It was too shadowy for them to see it distinctly, but they got the impression that it was something very extraordinary, not unlike a nude trussed body that did not seem human nor quite animal, but an unpleasant mixture of both and something else. It came bumping down the stairs and rolled right past them to the door at the top of the basement steps. They heard it bumping down the steps. Then there was silence.

The Webbs looked at one another aghast. They had all seen and heard the thing and had been too frightened and horribly fascinated to move or utter a word.

They returned to the fireside, sat huddled together and glanced every now and then apprehensively at the door. That same night Mr. Moor awoke with the feeling he was not alone in the room. He listened and heard a curious pattering sound. It seemed to come from a large cupboard inlet in a corner of the room, and to approach the bed. He opened his eyes, looked and froze. Leaning over the foot-rail of the bed, grinning at him, was a nude, revoltingly fat, shapeless figure. Its face was yellow, its eyes pale, slanting and perfectly mad. It did not appear to have a nose. A gruesome light surrounded it. Mr. Moor, forcing himself to keep calm, with a great mental effort bade the thing begone, and in a few moments it faded away and vanished.

At the suggestion of a friend, who was a spiritualist, the Webbs had a séance one evening. They sat round a table in the breakfast room. For some time nothing happened, and then the table rose and fell and behaved in such a violent manner that Mrs. Webb was frightened and declared that there was something under the table moving it. Several of the other sitters experienced the same feeling, and the séance ended in a panic.

The following night Mona Webb woke feeling very thirsty.

She stretched out her hand for the box of matches which was on a chair by the side of the bed, and touched something cold and clammy. It was a face, not of the living but the dead. In response to her screams several of the family ran to her room. They only saw Mona, who had sustained such a severe shock that it was some time before she could explain what had happened.

Mr. Moor left the house the following morning, and the Webbs within a fortnight. Strange to say, the servants did not experience any of the ghostly happenings. They could not understand why the Webbs decided to vacate the house so suddenly.

A NEWCASTLE HAUNTING

AFTER a lecture that I gave in Manchester before the Second World War, the following story of a North Country haunting was told me by Mr. James McKaye:

Mr. McKaye, who was in business in Newcastle, found the house in which he and his family were living rather too far from his office. There were no automobiles in those days. So he went to view a house nearer his office.

As he was going upstairs to the first floor he heard footsteps following him. He turned sharply round but did not see anyone. Thinking this was odd but supposing that it might be due to the acoustic peculiarities of the building, he continued his ascent. He reached the first floor and went into one of the rooms. The footsteps followed him. He stamped his foot. There was no echo. He went into another room. The footsteps still followed him. He became frightened. It was daylight. The day was fine and warm. The sun's rays were streaming in through the blindless windows. He could hear birds singing merrily.

In broad daylight, with the sounds of street traffic in his ears, it was absurd to be afraid of ghosts. Ghosts belonged to the night.

Whoever heard of them manifesting or demonstrating in the daytime when it was light? Ridiculous! Absolutely silly of him to be scared! And yet he was scared.

Something drew his attention to one of the walls. There was a shadow on it, and it was not his shadow. It was not the shadow of anything he had ever seen. He ran down the stairs and out of the house.

One would have thought that after this Mr. McKaye would

not have thought of renting the house. But the house had a peculiar attraction for him. He was fascinated by it. He could not get it out of his mind. He dreamed about it in connection with a mystery which he tried to solve, and was always on the verge of solving when he awoke.

There was not another house in the city which was so conveniently situated for him and obtainable at such a low rent. Consequently he took the house, and within a few days had moved into it with all his family and household goods.

For the first few weeks nothing at all disturbing occurred, and Mr. McKaye plumed himself upon having made such an excellent bargain. He had got the house at an even lower rental than it was offered at first.

One morning, however, something occurred that made him feel not quite so thoroughly pleased with himself. He was writing a letter in his study when the nursemaid came to him in a state of great agitation.

"Oh, please come at once to the nursery, sir," she implored, "the children are playing with something that looks like a dog, and is not a dog. I don't know what it is," and she began to cry.

"You are mad," Mr. McKaye exclaimed impatiently. He, nevertheless, sprang up from his chair and ran upstairs.

On reaching the nursery, the blurred outline of something like a big dog or wolf came out of the half-open door, and tore past him, so close that he distinctly felt it brush against him. Where it went he did not know; he was thinking too much of the children to look. To his surprise and relief the children were not at all frightened; on the contrary, they were laughing.

"Is the funny dog yours, Daddy?" one of them, a little girl, asked. "It never wagged its tail like other doggies do, and whenever we tried to stroke it, it slipped away from us."

Mr. McKay pretended that it was a dog belonging to a neighbour. He told his wife what had occurred, and she declared that they must leave the house as soon as possible. He agreed.

That night he sat in his study writing, long after everyone had gone to bed. It was nearly one o'clock when he rose from his chair. He was about to turn off the gas when he felt his outstretched hand seized by something cold and pulpy, that did not seem to have any fingers. He was so terrified that he screamed, whereupon his hand was instantly released, and there was a loud crash overhead.

He rushed to his wife's room and found her sitting up in bed, talking in her sleep. She appeared to be speaking to a dark, shadowy figure that was crouching on the floor by the bed. It resembled the shadow that he had seen on the wall the day on which he came to view the house. It was not a dog, not a wolf, not a bear, but a grotesque mixture of all three, combined with something human and very evil. It vanished almost at once.

Mrs. McKaye woke, and said that she had had a very horrible dream. She dreamed that she had witnessed a very dreadful murder committed in the house by a person who did not look human. She declared that the house was haunted by something extremely evil, and begged her husband to vacate it that very day. She said that nothing would persuade her to stay another night in it. Within twenty-four hours the house was once again vacant.

Mr. McKaye made numerous enquiries about the house but elicited no information other than that it had long been rumoured to be haunted, and no tenant ever stayed in it for long.

A strange story of a spirit prognosticating death was told in the Christmas number of the *Weekly Scotsman*.[1]

An acquaintance of the writer of the story went on a visit one Christmas to a house in Perth. He intended to spend a week there. On the night of his arrival, being very tired, he went to bed early and was soon sound asleep. He awoke with a violent start, to find himself lying on his back, staring up at the moonlit ceiling with wide-open eyes. One of his hands was hanging over the side of the bed. Suddenly it was gripped by an icy-cold hand, which lacked a middle finger. The shock was so great that he nearly fainted, but recovering with an effort he leaned over the side of the bed, and with his left hand felt the icy hand and arm that was holding his right hand. The arm terminated at the elbow. The shock of this discovery proved too great. He really did faint this time. When he recovered consciousness his right hand was free, the cold phantom hand had gone.

At breakfast in the morning he related his experience to his host, who, on hearing the description of the hand, turned deathly pale, and said: "For goodness' sake say no more. Years ago an ancestor of mine, who had lost the middle finger of his right hand under anything but creditable circumstances, committed suicide in your room, and ever since then he has periodically haunted the room. His presence never presages a serious happening unless he

[1] December, 1925.

catches hold of anyone. Should he do that, some terrible misfortune is sure to occur."

He had hardly finished speaking when a maid entered the room and handed him a telegram. It stated that his youngest son had died suddenly.

THE HOUSE OF THE CRAZY FANCIES

DURING a period of over forty years I have given talks on ghostly phenomena to all kinds of audiences and in all kinds of places, and after my talks people have told me some of their own experiences with the supernatural. The story of the House of Crazy Fancies was told me by a lady after a talk by me at a well-known Mayfair club. She said that she was intimately acquainted with the family mentioned in the story.[1]

The story, which is compiled from the notes that I made at the time that it was related to me, runs thus:

The house was somewhere in Surrey not many miles from London. It was not very old and there was nothing remarkable in its appearance, nothing to suggest even to an impressionable, highly sensitive person that it was haunted.

People passed it without as much as a glance at it. It was just a very ordinary-looking detached villa in a quiet road in a town within twenty miles of London. It had stood empty for some time before Ronald Gregory Walker, pleased with the account Mabel, his pretty blonde wife, gave of it, after going over it one day with an estate agent's clerk, bought it, and had the good luck to move when the weather was fine. Moving in wet weather does furniture no good and makes cleaning extra hard.

The Walker family consisted of Ronald, a middle-aged, thoroughly practical, hard-headed business man; Mabel, his junior by ten years; Peter, his eldest son, who was a medical student; Violet, nineteen years of age, blonde and pretty, like her mother; Roma, still at school, not as fair as Violet but none the less attractive; and Jack, aged twelve, and at a local preparatory school.

The house had in the rear of it quite a large garden, which from long lack of attention was overgrown with weeds. Ronald promised the boys a good tip apiece if they would help the gardener

[1] The names in the story are fictitious.

in getting it in order. He was fond of gardening and he believed in making his sons useful at home.

It was in this garden—there was a smaller front garden—that the first of the queer happenings, that were later destined to drive them out of the house, took place. Peter and Jack had been helping Smith, the gardener, during the afternoon, with the flower-beds, and after he had had his tea and gone, they were having a little game with a tennis ball.

Roma came out of the house to call them in to tea; the bell had been rung more than once. Picking up the ball, which Jack had thrown to her, but which she declared she could not catch owing to the waning daylight, she threw it at a cat that had raised her ire by killing birds. The ball, going wide of its mark, a common occurrence with her, entered a nearby bush, and was at once returned to her with considerable force.

Greatly astonished, she called out: "Who's that? What are you doing there?" She ran to the bush and looked behind it. No one was there.

"What's up?" Peter asked.

Roma told him, and he and Jack searched around without finding anyone. The bush was well away from the walls surrounding the garden. They were high walls, and it would have been practically impossible for anyone to have scaled one of them without being seen. There was a door leading into a lane at the end of the garden but it was locked and bolted. Neither of the boys could have thrown the ball, because they were not near enough to the bush at the time.

Trivial as was the incident, it greatly perplexed and mystified Roma and her brothers. Roma told her parents, who laughed and said that someone must have been hiding in the garden and thrown the ball for fun.

Roma and the boys declared that this was impossible since they had searched the garden so thoroughly, and there was really nowhere for anyone to have hidden.

Ronald and Mabel shrugged. "Someone was there," they persisted. "It was dusk and you didn't see them."

The trio let it go at that but they weren't satisfied.

Some nights after the incident of the ball, Ronald Walker was sitting in the little room which he called his study. By him on the table were several sealed and addressed envelopes. He had been striving to work off much overdue arrears in corres-

pondence, and becoming weary had lain down his pen to rest awhile.

It was close on midnight; the rest of the household had long gone to bed. The house and everywhere was very still. Not a sound, except the pattering of raindrops on the window-panes. The weather being cold and wet he had drawn the heavy green curtains across the window recess. Now something made him look at them. They were violently shaking. Thinking this odd, he rose from his seat and going to the window made sure that it was shut and latched. He felt with his hand to see if there was much draught. There was a little but assuredly not enough to produce such shaking in the curtains. A little puzzled, he returned to his seat and drew it nearer to the gas-fire. He felt suddenly chilly. Perhaps it was the behaviour of the curtains, and his mind reverted to Roma's story of the tennis ball. Of course someone had been hiding in the bush and had thrown it at her. Probably a boy from one of the neighbouring houses; he had seen boys going in and out of several of the houses in the road. The young devil had no doubt enjoyed their inability to find him, and had made off as soon as the coast was clear. What more likely?

The silence was very profound. It rather got on his nerves. He wanted to go to bed, but the warmth of the fire was so enjoyable that he did not like leaving it. A sudden consciousness of some presence behind him made him glance apprehensively round. There was no one. He frowned at the wall-paper, a vile mixture of bilious yellow and dyspeptic green, with a jumble of flowers of an unknown species. It was soiled and had probably been on the walls for many years.

The longer he stared at it, the more it jarred his nerves. He determined to get rid of it as soon as possible. There seemed to be something unusual about it tonight; something that made him keep on gazing at it, at one spot in particular. Of course, it was just his silly imagination, but in the flowers and leaves he could see a grotesque resemblance to a face, such as one sometimes sees in a fire or in the pattern of a carpet. It became more and more pronounced. A queer, distorted face with prick ears, a grinning mouth and ogrish, leering eyes.

With an effort he tore his gaze from it; but wherever he looked it was the same. Grotesque faces grinned and leered mockingly at him. He rubbed his eyes, but still he saw them.

"I've been using my brain too much," he said to himself.

"I'm suffering from hallucinations. Perhaps I ate more than was good for me, or it may be eye-strain."

Whatever the faces were, figments of his distorted imagination, or actually in the design on the walls, they were harassing, and he did not like them. At last, unable to bear the sight of them any longer, he got up, left the room and went to bed.

As soon as he came down in the morning he went to the study and looked at the wall-paper. There were the flowers and intertwining nondescript leaves, but no suggestion of the queer faces. Consequently, he tried to persuade himself that they were entirely imaginary. He did not say a word about them to the family.

It was Mabel Walker's turn next.

One evening, about a week after Ronald's experience in the study, she was sitting in the drawing-room, mending socks and stockings. Ronald was at a club dinner. Peter and Jack were spending the week-end with friends in the country, and the two girls were at a party.

Mabel was alone in the house, and felt like it. Everywhere was so very quiet, and there was such a sense of no one but herself in the building. Suddenly she had the feeling of being watched. It was distinctly disquieting. She did not like it. She got up and made sure the curtains were drawn, and that no one could see in through the window. She went into the hall, and into the rooms and kitchen, and tried the front and back doors, to see if they were fastened. In fact, so strong had been the impression of eyes covertly spying on her, that she searched everywhere.

Convinced at last that no one but herself was in the house, she returned to her comfortable seat by the fire. As soon as she had finished mending one pair of socks or stockings she put them on the chesterfield, which was close at hand. She was in the act of putting a pair there when she stopped short.

There were four cushions on the chesterfield, two at each end, and the one on which her eyes were riveted bore a not at all nice resemblance to a face. There was a protuberance for the nose, another protuberance for a sharply defined chin, a long dent for a mouth, and two small dents for the eyes, which were unpleasantly life-like and seemed to be regarding her with an expression of malicious amusement. She looked at the other cushions, and in each one of them she saw a different face, equally, if not more, sinister and mocking.

Fearing there was either something wrong with her brain or

stomach, she got up, and, having rearranged the cushions, went on with her mending, swearing at the manufacturers for making such very poor material, at the shops where they came from for charging such exorbitant prices, and at the Government for allowing such gross profiteering.

Presently she was again conscious of being watched, and on looking round she saw, with a start, that the cushions were not as she had left them. There were again faces, queer animal faces with the same expression of malicious amusement in their eyes. She became scared and wondered if she was in a nightmare. To make sure that she was awake, she rose and looked at herself in the mirror over the mantelshelf. When she got back to her chair the faces were no longer to be seen.

The front door-bell rang. She went to the door and asked who was there. There was no reply. She opened the door; no one was there. She was about to return to the drawing-room when something caused her to look at the coats hanging in the hall.

It was then that she got her second start. This time it was a very big one, for one of the coats, a long white mackintosh, was not hanging loosely down like the other coats but was bulging in a very peculiar manner. It seemed very much as if some strange *thing* of an alarming shape and of considerable size was inside it. It gave her a distinctly uncanny sensation.

Endeavouring to be calm, she was about to cross to the mackintosh to find out what was causing the bulge when there were three sharp knocks on the front door. It was Ronald.

After listening to his account of the dinner, she told him that she believed she must be going mad, or else there was something very much the matter with her eyes. When he asked what made her think such a thing, she told him about the mackintosh and cushions.

He listened with interest to all she had to say, and then said, "Well, if you are mad, I must be mad too," and he proceeded to tell her about the faces in the wall-paper. They agreed not to say anything about their experiences at present to the children.

When they had done talking, Mabel suddenly remembered the mackintosh. They went together to the recess. The mackintosh no longer bulged: it was hanging quite normally.

That there was something very queer about the house they were now constrained to admit. Before coming there they had rather scoffed at the idea of a supernatural, but after what they had experienced they did not feel like scoffing any more.

the whole body, in fact—gave Violet the impression of a much too realistic and wholly evil corpse.

Telling herself that it was very silly to be frightened by a pillow and bedclothes, but nevertheless continuing to be frightened—she could not forget seeing the bed rise—she got into bed, with the candle still burning, and after a while fell asleep and did not wake until the morning.

Contrary to her expectation, no one laughed when she narrated her experience at the breakfast table. They all listened gravely.

"I had much the same experience two nights ago," Peter said. "I wasn't going to say anything about it, but after what you have told us, I won't keep it to myself any longer." His story was as follows:

Not feeling well, he got up in the night, and, having lighted the gas-fire, as he felt chilly, he went to the lavatory, where he was sick. On coming back to his room, he was startled to see a figure seated in the armchair near the window.

"Who the devil are you?" he exclaimed.

There was no reply. The figure remained perfectly still. He spoke again and more peremptorily; still no answer. Wondering who the person could be, he advanced a few paces nearer to the chair.

The window was slightly open, and the night wind blew into the room with a gust, stirring the curtains and causing them to rustle with a ghostly sound.

The figure in the chair was alarmingly queer. Its head went up into a grotesque peak. It had pointed ears and no apparent neck. In the glow from the fire the face of the figure in the chair shone an unearthly white. There was something so bizarre about it that he was scared, although he tried to assure himself that it could only be an illusion. He lit the candle, and when he looked at the chair the strange figure had vanished. Only his coat and trousers were on the chair. He had put them there before getting into bed. He spent quite a long time endeavouring to arrange them to resemble the figure that he had seen, but, try how he would, he could not succeed. They kept on being just his clothes, bearing no likeness whatsoever to the frightening figure.

Other queer things happened. The Walkers continually lost things, to find them afterwards either in a place which they had thoroughly searched or in a spot where it did not seem possible that they could have put them. The house finally got on all their

nerves to such an extent that they were obliged to leave it long before the expiration of the lease.

Neither their servants nor their visitors ever complained of any queer happenings in the house, and the people who occupied the house after the Walkers had left it lived there seemingly perfectly peacefully, and were never known to complain of being harassed in any way.

The Walkers wondered if they had been affected by the lingering thoughts of some former occupant of the house, who had been at all deranged; or whether there was something really supernatural in the house that, for a very peculiar reason, was inimical only to them. The ball incident in the garden seemed to give considerable colour to this supposition.

THE PHANTOM BUTLER

One bright summer morning Miss Wakefield and her friend, Miss Smith, were walking along a road in the old residential suburb of a Warwickshire town. While passing an empty, desolate-looking house Miss Smith remarked that it looked as if it was haunted.

"You are quite right," Miss Wakefield said. "It is haunted. That is why it is unoccupied. I can't tell you now what I know about the haunting but I will this evening."

When the evening came, and they were seated in Miss Wakefield's prettily furnished little drawing-room, Miss Wakefield began her tale.[1]

"One evening nine years ago my cousin, Jane Goodman, was sitting with her friend, Lucy Barnes, in the drawing-room of Number 17 Longcroft Road, the house that you thought looked haunted.

" 'You won't mind my leaving you for a few minutes,' Jane said. 'There are one or two things I must tell my daily woman before she leaves. She is staying rather later than usual this evening to oblige.'

"When Jane returned to the drawing-room, after being absent for a little longer than she had anticipated, she found Lucy looking very white and agitated.

[1] A reference to this haunting is in *Spectre Stricken*. Anonymous.

" 'Is anything the matter?' she asked. 'Aren't you feeling well?'

" 'I'm quite all right,' Lucy replied. 'Just a little tired. I must be going home.'

"Jane looked distressed. 'What, so soon!'

" 'Yes,' Lucy said. 'I promised Mother that I would not be late.'

"She went. Jane did not see her again for some days.

"One evening Jane was sitting alone in the dining-room, when she heard a curious sound. She looked around the room and saw the bright handle of the door turn rapidly round and round. She at once rose and opened the door. No one was there. That same night she woke to hear a sound like rushing water in the room. She lit the gas but could not find anything to account for the noise.

"A few days later she heard screams from the kitchen, and found Emma, the cook, lying on the kitchen floor. She thought at first that Emma was dead, but to her great relief Emma had only fainted. When Emma had sufficiently recovered she told Jane what had happened.

"She said that she was in the larder when she heard a tremendous noise, as if a number of trays had been thrown about. She ran into the kitchen, and saw a man lying on the floor, with his arms folded across his breast. He was dressed in white. His face and eyes were those of a dead man, and he had a long beard. The sight of him gave her such a dreadful shock that she fainted. She would not remain any longer in the house, but left that very day. She was very ill afterwards, and it was many weeks before she was able to resume work.

"The woman whom Jane engaged in her place had not been in the house long before she declared that it was haunted. She said that things were thrown about in the kitchen by invisible hands, and that she was awakened in the night by footsteps pacing up and down the floor of her room, the door handle of which kept turning round and round. She gave notice to leave before she had been in the house a week.

"The day on which the new cook came Jane met Lucy Barnes in the town, and Lucy told her what had happened the evening when she had appeared so pale and agitated.

"She was sitting by the window reading when she heard a cough. It sounded at her elbow. Thinking that it was Jane, she turned to speak to her. To her surprise, however, it was not Jane but a tall figure in white, with a death-like face and a long beard.

The apparition glided round the room three or four times and disappeared through the wall near the fireplace, from which there issued waves of gruesome, luminous blue vapour. She was so appalled that she felt on the verge of fainting.

"After hearing Lucy's account of what had happened on that particular occasion, Jane told her about the phantom that the cook had seen lying on the kitchen floor, and about the mysterious turning of the door handles and the disturbing noises. Jane decided then and there to resign her tenancy of the house, and in less than a week she left. No tenants ever remained in the house for the full duration of their lease.

"A butler is rumoured to have committed suicide in the house," Miss Wakefield said, "and it may have been his ghost that Lucy Barnes and the cook saw. I have seen the room in which he killed himself. It is in the basement. The sun's rays never penetrate into it, and the atmosphere even in warm weather is always chilly.

"On the worn stone-flagged floor there is a broad, red stain, which no amount of scrubbing can ever efface. It is believed to be human blood. The butler cut his throat."

THE OLD HOUSE OF URRARD

MRS. D. OGILVY, in her book of *Highland Minstrelsy*, which was published in the forties of the last century, devoted a poem to a description of the Old House of Urrard, which, from a high wooded bank, overlooked the northern outlet of the Pass of Killiecrankie, the scene in 1689 of the fierce conflict between the Anglo-Hanoverian Army, under General Mackay, and the gallant Highlanders under Viscount Dundee.

Mrs. Ogilvy's poem was based on childhood memories of the Old House and its famous surroundings.

> "Enough remains of the Old House of Urrard to keep alive the memory of its traditions; whilst its tales of spiritual intrusion have been nourished by the finding of skeletons, rusted swords, and mouldered garments; and gossip of ghostly company arraying themselves in brocaded robes and sweeping trains; and of the grotesque horror of silken dresses trailing along the floor."[1]

[1] *Illustrated London News*, May 23, 1846.

THE OLD HOUSE OF URRARD

Dost fear the grim brown twilight?
Dost care to walk alone,
When the firs upon the hill-top
With human voices moan?
When the river twineth restless
Through deep and jagged linn,
Like one who cannot sleep o' nights
For evil thoughts within?
When the hooting owls grow silent
The ghostly sounds to hark,
In the ancient house of Urrard,
When the night is still and dark?

There are graves about old Urrard,
Huge mounds by rock and tree,
And they who lie beneath them
Died fighting by Dundee.
Far down along the valley,
And up along the hill,
The fight of Killiecrankie
Has left a story still.
But thickest show the traces,
And thickest throng the sprites,
In the woods about old Urrard,
On the gloomy winter nights.

In the garden of old Urrard,
Among the bushy yews,
A turfen hillock rises,
Refreshed by faithful dews;
Here sank the warrior stricken
By charmful silver ball,
And all the might of victory
Dropped nerveless in his fall.
Last hope of exiled Stuart,
Last heir of Chivalrie,
In the garden of old Urrard
He fell, the brave Dundee.

In the ancient house of Urrard
There's many a hiding den,
The very walls are hollow
To cover dying men;
For not e'en a lady's chamber
Barred out the fierce affray,

And couch and damask curtain
Were stained with blood that day.
And there's a secret passage,
Whence sword and skull and bone
Were brought to light in Urrard,
When years had passed and gone.

If thou sleep alone in Urrard,
Perchance in midnight gloom
Thou'lt hear behind the wainscot
Of that old haunted room
A fleshless hand that knocketh,
A wail that cries on thee,
And rattling limbs that struggle
To break out and be free.
It is a thought of horror;
I would not sleep alone
In the haunted rooms of Urrard,
Where evil deeds were done.

Amid the dust of garrets
That stretch along the roof,
Stand chests of ancient garments
Of gold and silken woof.
Where men are locked in slumber
The rustling sounds are heard
Of dainty ladies' dresses,
Of laugh and whispered word,
Of waving wind of feathers,
And steps of dancing feet,
In the garrets of old Urrard,
Where the winds of winter beat.

By the ancient house of Urrard
Its guardian mountain sits,
Whene'er those sounds arouse him
His cloudy brow he knits;
For he the feast remembers,
Remembers he the fray,
And to him flit the spectres
At breaking of the day.
There under mossy lichen
They couch with hare and fox,
Near the ancient house of Urrard,
'Mong Ben-y-Vrachy's rocks.

Mrs. Ogilvy's book of *Highland Minstrelsy* contains poems of two classes, embodying historical legend or dealing with the

superstitions of a romantic people. They are remarkable for their veracity, pathos and beauty. 'The Old House of Urrard' and 'The Spinning of the Shroud' are generally considered among the finest.

Few writers can equal her in her graphic narration of ghostly happenings, whether in an old house or elsewhere. There is always a touching truth about them, which makes them all the more appealing to people genuinely interested in ghost-lore.

I have spent many nights alone and with other people in reputed haunted houses, where sounds of rustling silken garments, wailing cries and footsteps were heard at times, generally when least expected, and the reading of Mrs. Ogilvy's poems brings back my experiences in those houses most vividly to mind. She had the faculty of creating a ghostly atmospheric effect, which only believers in the supernatural can understand.

Not a few of old Scottish houses reek with the ghostly atmosphere of the ancient House of Urrard.

The battlefields of Killiecrankie and Culloden, like so many battlefields in other parts of the world, are said to be haunted. A lesser-known old haunted battlefield is near Kilry in Strathmore. A man who spent a night there never got over the shock of what he saw and heard.[1]

I have heard similar stories about Glencoe, where it is said that sometimes on the anniversary of the massacre ghostly phenomena of the most appalling kind occur.

EDINBURGH GHOSTS

LAW-SUITS concerning ghostly happenings are by no means uncommon.

Many people interested in hauntings will doubtless recollect a case that occurred in Dublin in 1885, and another in Drogheda in 1890. In both these cases the landlords concerned strongly objected to their houses being alleged to be haunted.

In 1835 Captain Molesworth rented a house at Trinity, near Edinburgh, which belonged to a Mr. Webster. After he had been in the house for about two months he began to complain of extraordinary noises, and accused Mr. Webster, who lived next door, of making them. Mr. Webster indignantly repudiated the charge.

[1] *Legends of Strathmore*, by William Gow.

The noises continued, and Captain Molesworth not only took up the boards in the room in which the noises were worst, but bored holes in one of the walls which divided his residence from that of Mr. Webster, in order to detect the culprit.

His efforts were fruitless; the disturbances became worse; there were footsteps made by invisible feet, knockings, scratchings and the rustling of dresses. Sometimes the knocker seemed to be trying to play a tune, and if asked a question would respond by so many knocks.

Alarming things happened. Beds were raised during the night as if someone was underneath them, and the knockings were so violent at times that the walls shook.

Captain Molesworth had had two daughters, one of whom was named Matilda, the other one Jane. Matilda had died recently. Jane, who was between twelve and thirteen years of age, was frequently ill in bed. The fact that the noises were generally most frequent and loudest in her room made some people think that she made them. Other people thought that it was the ghost of Matilda, warning Jane that she was doomed to die very shortly.

Sheriff's officers, masons, magistrates, army officers and friends and relatives of Captain Molesworth spent nights in the house, in the hope of solving the mystery. Jane was bound, in order to prevent her playing any tricks. All to no purpose. The disturbances continued and grew worse and worse.

At length, unable to stand the haunting any longer, Captain Molesworth left the house. Mr. Webster brought an action against him for the damages committed by taking up the boards, breaking the walls and firing bullets at the wainscoting, as well as for slander of title, declaring that the house was defamed through spreading the report that it was haunted. The law-suit lasted for two years, and numerous witnesses were examined. I have been unable to find out how it ended.

Jane Molesworth died soon after she left the house, and the people who subsequently took it never complained of any mysterious disturbances.[1]

Mr. Robert Chambers, in his *Traditions of Edinburgh*, mentions several cases of haunting in the Scottish capital.

The house in which Major Weir and his sister lived was for many years haunted. People dreaded to walk past it after nightfall.

William Patullo, an Edinburgh man of a roving disposition,

[1] *Satan's Invisible World*, by Prof. G. Sinclair.

who had been a soldier and a traveller, had the reputation of being afraid of no one and nothing. Upon hearing that Weir's house was to be let at a very low rental, he took it on a rather long lease. The night after he and his wife moved into the house they were lying awake when they saw a figure, like a calf, come to the bed. It rested its forefeet on the foot-rail and stared at them. When it had contemplated them thus for a few moments, it slowly backed away from the bed and gradually vanished.

They left the house the next day, and for fifty years it remained unoccupied by any living human being. Sometimes the house was seen during the night to be illuminated with a gruesome light, and sounds of dancing, howling and spinning were heard proceeding from it. On several occasions people saw the ghost of Weir emerge from the house, mount on a phantom black, headless horse, and gallop away in a cloud of dust. Sometimes the whole of the inhabitants of the Bow would be roused from sleep by the sound of a phantom coach-and-six dashing up the Lawn-market and down the Bow. Inside the coach, their white, evil faces looking out of the windows, were the ghosts of the sorcerer Weir and his satanic sister.

There was a house in Edinburgh Lawn-market which for some extraordinary reason was shut up for many years. A grand banquet was about to take place in the house one night, the host and guests were seated at the table, when something so dreadful occurred that they all rose from their chairs and rushed out of the house. None of them ever returned to it.

The house was shut up and everything, even the food on the table, was left just as it was when they fled. No one knew to whom the house belonged; no one ever enquired after it; no one living after that night ever saw the inside of it. What occurred to cause such a panic was never known. Possibly the house still remains closed, a house of fearful, unsolved mystery.

Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfries, which was built by the first Duke of Queensberry, is said to have been haunted by the ghost of Lady Anne Douglas, who used to walk about the building with her head in one hand and her fan in the other. Every now and then she fanned her head vigorously.

After the death of the first Duke of Queensberry a phantom coach-and-six, with a headless coachman, used to be seen on the anniversary of his death, driving up to the castle. The ghost of the Duke, accompanied by a tall, hooded figure in black, emerged

from the castle and got into the coach, which drove away at a furious rate, passing through the closed gate of the main lodge.

The town mansion of the Duke in Canongate, a large, gloomy mansion, was likewise rumoured to be haunted. After standing empty for many years it was converted into a home for destitute people. No one seems to have enquired or cared whether the ghost frightened them.

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF A MINISTER

FEW cities have contained more reputed badly haunted houses than Edinburgh, and most of them would seem to have been in the vicinity of the Canongate. The following account of a haunting in that part of Edinburgh is based on a traditional story told to Sir Walter Scott by one of his friends.

Late one night, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, a clergyman in Edinburgh was aroused from his sleep by loud knocking on the front door of his house. On rising and opening the door he was confronted by a heavily cloaked, masked man, who ordered him to get into a sedan-chair. Not daring to disobey, as the man was armed, he did as he was bidden and was taken to a remote part of the town. On the way he overheard a conversation between the men who were bearing him, which led him to believe that they were not ordinary sedan-men but belonged to a very superior class.

When at last they set him down, they blindfolded him, threatening to kill him if he resisted or uttered a sound. They then led him into a building, across what appeared to be a very spacious hall, up a flight of stairs, along a corridor to a large, well-furnished room. There they removed the bandage from his eyes.

They then conducted him into an inner chamber, in which a lady, who had recently been delivered of a child, was lying in bed.

He was ordered by one of the men who had brought him to the house to say such prayers by the bedside as were appropriate for a person not expected to survive for many hours. He remonstrated, expressing his opinion that the lady did not appear to be in such a critical condition. He was sternly commanded to obey his instructions and threatened with severe punishment if he hesitated and dallied.

In fear and trembling he knelt by the bedside, and as soon as he had finished praying he was again blindfolded. As he was

being hurriedly led downstairs he heard the significant report of a firearm. He was taken safely home and given a large sum of money; but at the same time warned that the least allusion to what had transpired that night would cost him his life.

Early in the morning his servant came to his room in a great state of excitement, and informed him that a house, in close proximity to the Canongate, had been destroyed by fire during the night, and that the owner's daughter, a lady eminent for her beauty and accomplishments, had perished in the flames. The clergyman had his suspicions.

The family, whom he suspected of being responsible for the tragedy, was wealthy and influential. He was poor, without influence, and naturally timid. To have made public his suspicions would have availed nothing. It would only have antagonized the family and jeopardized his safety, so he held his tongue. The deed was done, he reflected, and could not be undone.

As the years went by he grew less apprehensive and cautious, and finally related his experience on the night of the fire to some of his fellow clergy. He died shortly afterwards.

His tale, which had been widely circulated, was after a time nearly forgotten, when something happened which recalled it vividly to mind. A fire broke out on the very same site on which the house that figured so tragically in the clergyman's story had once stood. When the fire was at its height, the phantom of a lovely woman in a costly but very antique style of nightdress appeared in the midst of the raging flames, and in an awful voice cried out: "Once burned! Twice burned! The third time I will scare you all." She then vanished. The people who had assembled to view the conflagration saw and heard the apparition, and were so terrified that they lost no time in quitting the scene.

The belief in this traditional story was formerly so strong in Edinburgh that on a fire occurring for the third time on the same site, there was considerable apprehension lest the phantom should fulfil her threat. Apparently she relented, for nothing very dreadful happened. For several years after the third fire a red stain was to be seen on the wall of the house which had suffered in the conflagration. It was probably paint, but superstitious people, remembering the clergyman's story, believed it to have been put there by the phantom of the beautiful lady as a reminder of the awful manner of her death.

At Holyrood the stains of Rizzio's blood are still shown on the

floor of the passage near the back stairs, leading from Queen Mary's room. According to tradition, they are indelible and no amount of scrubbing can efface them. One wonders if a serious attempt has ever been made! In the *Second Series of the Chronicles of the Canongate* reference is made to them in the introduction, where the Cockney attempted to remove them by scouring-drops, much to the horror of the housekeeper, and could only be induced to desist by the entreaties of Mr. Chrystal Croftangry, who explained that they ought to remain indelible, on account of the associations with which they were connected.

Robert Chambers regards them in the light of a traditionary absurdity, since the boards are comparatively modern and must have been laid down long after the murder of Rizzio, the old floor of his day being no doubt worn out.

A HAUNTED INN

TRADITIONAL stories of hauntings in connection with the days of wreckers and smugglers do not appear to be so numerous in Scotland as they are in England. Hugh Miller in his *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland* relates a case of haunting arising out of the accidental killing of a notorious Scottish smuggler.

In the reign of Queen Anne, John MacLeod, a merchant of Cromarty, owned the principal inn in that town. He had an only son, Walter, who for several years had been very actively engaged in smuggling in brazen defiance of the officers of the revenue.

He was in the habit of transferring the goods which he had smuggled from a cavern on the sea-shore to a vault in his father's inn.

One evening, soon after he had brought home a fresh supply of smuggled goods, mostly spirits, he was sitting by the kitchen fire talking to his father, when two revenue officers entered the inn and asked for liquor. Walter, as soon as he saw them, edged away from under the lamp which lighted the kitchen, and muffled himself up in the folds of his dreadnought greatcoat.

His father attended to the officers. One of the officers enquired for Walter, and expressed a hope that he was not on board a smuggler's vessel that had been captured in Scottish waters that morning, as it would go hard with the prisoners, since they had fired on a revenue ship.

was a ghost, the little boy ran downstairs and told his sister that there was "a muckle big man i' the top of the house". His sister at once summoned some of the neighbours, who searched the house from the garrets to the cellars, without discovering a trace of the mysterious stranger. These were only a few of the ghostly occurrences that acquired for the inn the unpleasant reputation of being very badly haunted.

TWO HAUNTED HOUSES

IN THE early years of the 19th century there was living in one wing of an old mansion house of Garleton, in the Scottish Highlands, Miss Janet Hepburn, sister of Colonel Hepburn of Luffness and Congalton. She was elderly, tall and thin, and when walking in the grounds of the house always wore a black silk cloak and bonnet, and carried a large cane ornamented with a gold chain and tassel.

She often rambled out of doors in the dead of night and early morning, until her clothes were saturated with rain or dew, when she hurried back to the house, tore them off and scrambled into bed, to stay there till noon or even later. Mainly on account of her extreme eccentricity she was regarded with terror and aversion by the neighbouring superstitious villagers.

Having sauntered out one morning before sunrise she sat down to rest awhile on a craggy hill. She had not been there long when a very odd-looking man, in sombre black clothes, who seemed to rise from the ground, slowly approached her. He was very pale, unkempt and emaciated, and his eyes had such a strange expression in them that she was scared, and shook her cane at him to keep him off. He went away muttering, and disappeared in the same sudden and mysterious manner as he had appeared.

Try how she would she could not banish him from her mind. The thought of him frightened her so much that she exercised more than usual care that night before going to bed. She made sure all the windows and doors were shut and securely fastened, and after locking the outer door she put the key of it under her pillow. She did not venture out of doors but sat up till a late hour reading.

When she was in bed she could not sleep; she could not expel the peculiar man she had seen in the grounds that morning from her thoughts. She was lying awake, trying all kinds of devices

to send her to sleep, when she heard the front door, which she had so carefully locked and bolted, open. A few moments later she heard heavy steps cross the hall and ascend the stairs leading to her room. Presently the door slowly opened. Sick with terror she forced herself to sit up and ask in a trembling voice who was there, although she knew instinctively that it must be the man who had terrified her. She was not mistaken. It was the man.

"This is my native place," he said. "I have a long history which I must tell you."

He moved slowly towards the bed. Thinking he had come to rob and perhaps kill her, she pointed to a box containing her money and jewellery, and bade him take what he wanted and begone. He tried to speak, to tell her the reason of his visit, but she would not listen. She crossed herself—she was a Roman Catholic—put her fingers in her ears and once again told him to go.

For a second or two he stood irresolute and then, eyeing her angrily, he turned and left the room. She heard him tramping down the creaking stairs and across the hall. The front door opened and closed with a bang, and then there was a deep, unbroken silence. Only two other people, an aged spinster and her servant, besides herself and her maid were in the building, and they were in the other wing of it.

In the morning when her maid brought her tea, she told her what happened and asked her to search to see if anything had been disturbed. The maid, who said she had heard a strange voice in the night, looked everywhere. The chest where the family plate was kept had not been opened, the doors and windows were all fastened, just as they had been when Miss Hepburn went to bed, nothing was disturbed, and there was no sign of anyone having entered the house. Miss Hepburn was thoroughly convinced now that her visitor in the night came from another world.

Exactly twelve months later Miss Hepburn died suddenly, about the hour when she had seen for the second time the phantom man in black with the terrifying eyes. Mr. Horace Welby, author of *Signs Before Death*, was told this story by an intimate acquaintance of Miss Hepburn, who vouched for the truth of it.

When I was staying in Forfarshire I used to go frequently to Montrose. A lady who lived in John Street told me that her aunt lived in a haunted house not far from Montrose. She said there was a room in the house the door of which would never keep shut during the night unless something very heavy was placed against it.

The lock had frequently been examined and found to be in perfectly good order, yet if the door was locked it invariably flew open, and always between two and three o'clock.

Bells sometimes rang without any apparent cause. My informant and her aunt were sitting in the parlour one afternoon when they heard footsteps cross the floor. They looked to see who it was, but no one was in the room except themselves. Their attention was drawn to the wall by the fireplace, and they both saw the handle of the old-fashioned wire bell pulled violently out. On several occasions all the bells in the house suddenly rang, and heavy footsteps were heard running up the stairs. Nothing ghostly was ever seen but often felt, especially on the staircase and in the parlour.

My informant was frightened only once in the house, and that was when she was going upstairs one morning, and there was a loud crash on the stairs just behind her. She was considerably startled and was unable to discover anything to account for the sound.

No tragedy was known to have ever occurred in the house, but it was believed to have been built on the site of an old cemetery, which might possibly afford an explanation for the hauntings.

THE HAUNTED CORRIDOR

CONSIDERABLE interest was exhibited towards the end of the last century in widespread rumours of the haunting of B—— House, near F——, in the south-west of England.[1]

The hearing of these rumours led Mr. W. and his friend Mr. K. to ask permission of the D. family who owned the house to spend a night in it, in order to find out if there was any truth in the alleged haunting. Permission having been obtained Mr. W. and his friend went to the house during the absence of the owners.

They dined early and soon after the meal took up their positions in the corridor where they understood that most of the ghostly happenings occurred. The corridor was very long with a door at each end of it. They set a table across the corridor, so as to bar the progress of any earthly intruder, and on it laid the revolvers which they had brought with them in case of hoaxers. They placed two tall lighted candles on the floor near the wall and about three feet

[1] *Strange Things Among Us*, by H. Spicer.

from the table. They sat at the table and played picquet and écarté until the big clock in the hall sounded midnight. They then ceased playing and listened very intently.

They heard nothing. Mr. K. yawned.

"I say, it's nonsense staying here any longer," he exclaimed. "No ghost ever comes after twelve o'clock. Supposing we have just one more game and then go to bed."

Mr. W. looked at his watch, which he had taken the precaution to set by the church clock, and found that the house clock was fast. By the right time it was not twelve. He proposed that they should remain in the corridor for at least a quarter of an hour longer. The words were hardly out of his mouth when they were acutely aware that *something* had entered the corridor. The silence was soon broken by the clicking of high-heeled shoes on the polished boards of the corridor. As the footsteps drew nearer they could hear rustling and what sounded like the brushing of a stiff silk dress against the walls, but they could see nothing. They were petrified with amazement and not a little scared. The footsteps passed the candles, the table and the two men, and continued to the end of the corridor. There was the sound of a door shutting very violently, and after that there was silence. Mr. W. and his friend retired very hurriedly to bed, convinced that B—— House was really very nastily haunted.

On one occasion a nurse had to pass through the corridor, leading a little girl who was deaf and dumb. As the ghostly sounds approached and passed them the child exhibited the utmost fright, clinging to the nurse and burying her face in the nurse's dress, as if to exclude the vision of something very awful. She could never be induced to enter the corridor again.

THE LEERING DEATH'S-HEAD

DURING the eighties and early nineties of the last century a large building near Aldershot which was closely associated with the Episcopacy was haunted by a ghost in armour, a phantom lady in white and an invisible terrifying ghost. The White Lady always predicted the death of someone closely connected with the building. She was seen on three occasions by three different people immediately prior to the death of a well-known bishop.

A lady who visited the building in 1893 was sitting by her

bedroom fire one night, when there was a loud knock on the door. She called out "Come in." The knock was repeated.

Again she bade the person to enter. There was another knock. The handle of the door turned noisily. The door flew open, admitting a current of icy air. The floor shook violently, as if some very heavy weight had been dropped or hurled on to it. The lady sensed the presence in the room of something very horrible and intensely malevolent. She was so frightened that she jumped into bed and hid under the clothes. She lay there quaking, too scared to move or utter a sound until the morning. She left the building soon after she had her breakfast, declaring that nothing would induce her to stay another night there.

The ghost in armour used to steal quietly into rooms, pinch the toes of sleepers to rouse them, raise its visor and disclose to their horrified gaze the ghastly leering face of a skeleton.

Fortunately for the occupants of the building the haunting by this phantom was very infrequent.

The cause and origin of the hauntings, if known, was never divulged to the public.

THE EVIL COUNTESS

IN THE early sixties of the last century Mr. Robinson,[1] a man who had acquired considerable wealth in trade, bought an old house near Walton-on-Thames that had for many years belonged to a well-known aristocratic family. As the house lacked modern conveniences and was not large enough for his family, Mr. Robinson had most of it pulled down, and erected a fine, imposing mansion in its place.

It was not until the Robinsons had been in the house for some weeks, and a visitor came to stay with them, that the disturbances began. The visitor was awakened one night by the sound of footsteps in the corridor outside her room. They sounded as if someone wearing high-heeled shoes was tapping their way very cautiously along the corridor. They stopped outside the visitor's room. The visitor heard the door handle turn and called out: "Who is there? What do you want?" There was no reply, and the door slowly opened. The visitor became alarmed. She sat up in bed, and saw an old woman, clad in costly garments belonging to a bygone period.

[1] Not his real name—*All the Year Round*, 1870.

Jewels sparkled on her waist and arms. She had white hair and black eyes, which gleamed evilly as they encountered the gaze of the terrified visitor. A gruesome light seemed to surround her. She crossed the floor to the fireplace, raised a skinny hand and shook it menacingly at the visitor, and vanished. The visitor left the house the following day.

After she had gone strange and startling sounds were heard in the house during the night. There were crashes, as if all the crockery in the kitchen had been thrown on to the tiled floor, trampings up and down the staircases, and mocking laughter.

People who slept in the room that had been occupied by the visitor were visited in the night by the phantom of the old woman with the evil eyes. She pulled the clothes off the bed, and if there was a candle or nightlight, blew it out. The room had finally to be used for lumber only and kept locked. The noises continued and became so violent that the Robinsons were compelled to sell the house. The haunting then ceased.

The ghost was believed to be that of a certain wicked Countess, an ancestress of the family who had sold the property to the Robinsons. She had been greatly attached to the house and always declared that she would haunt anyone who destroyed or altered any part of it.

Another haunting of an equally alarming description also occurred in the sixties of the last century.[1]

The Rev. Ernest Edwards accepted a curacy in a town in Rutlandshire. He took a small house on a four-years' lease, and moved into it with his wife and family.

Nothing unusual happened until one Sunday evening when Mrs. Edwards and the cook were alone in the house. About seven o'clock Mrs. Edwards heard a great noise in the room directly under the one in which she was sitting. A door slammed, a window was thrown up, curtains were pulled noisily and furniture was banged about and dragged across the floor. Mrs. Edwards rang for the cook, and enquired angrily what was going on in the room beneath her. The cook said that no one was in the house but herself, and that she had not heard any noise.

Not satisfied, Mrs. Edwards, accompanied by the cook, went down to the room. Nothing had been disturbed. She wondered if she had imagined the sounds. A few nights later she again heard them, and the same thing happened. When she went to the room, the sounds ceased and nothing had been moved. After that

[1] *All the Year Round*, 1870.

night strange unaccountable noises were heard in all parts of the house.

Two of the maids were sitting in a room on the ground floor one fine, perfectly still evening, when they heard the curtain in front of the window rustle, and saw it swell out, as if someone was concealed behind it. There was a distinct impress of a tall body. Directly they screamed the swelling went down, and the curtain hung quite naturally. The cook, who heard the screams, ran to the room, and the three woman looked apprehensively behind the curtain. The window was shut and fastened. There was nothing to explain the rustling and swelling of the curtain. The next day the maids gave notice to leave. The new maids did not stay long, and the Edwardses, worried by the ghostly happenings, left the house long before the termination of their lease.

Their enquiries as to the cause of the haunting proved fruitless. Ghosts apparently take a peculiar pleasure in harassing and tormenting clergymen and their families.

NOISY AND VIOLENT GHOSTS

NOISY AND VIOLENT GHOSTS

INCLUDED in this category are ghostly phenomena of a poltergeist character. One such case occurred in 1879 in north Lincolnshire.

Mr. Edward Soulby, a man of independent means, occupied a cottage in the village of Buttesford, which is a few miles from Scunthorpe. Mr. Soulby informed his nearest neighbours one day that he believed he was bewitched. He told them that one Sunday, when it was fine and there was very little wind, he had seen the branches of a tree, which grew very near the cottage, suddenly sway violently to and fro and deliberately crash against a window. It broke the glass to pieces. He said that soon after this had happened he saw the tea kettle bounce from the fire on to the kitchen floor and trot across the road. When it reached the far side of the road it trotted back into the cottage, resumed its position on the fire, and recommenced singing.

On another occasion he encountered a can of water on the staircase. It disputed the right of way with him, step by step, until he reached the landing, when it let him proceed without further interference.

More alarming things occurred. A heavy case, containing lard, came rattling down the stairs one day, and broke one of the steps. Some of the flagstones that paved the floor of the cottage at once rose, seemingly of their own accord, and hurled themselves through a window into the road.

The only other occupant of the cottage when these uncanny things occurred was Mr. Soulby's grand-daughter, Betsy Soulby, a girl well advanced in her teens, who lived with him. Soulby declared that an evil spirit was responsible for all the strange and destructive happenings. He made Betsy and the domestic animals, including the pigs, wear garlands of wicker branches round their backs, hoping that this would be a means of getting rid of the spirit.

Mr. Peacock, a magistrate, who resided in a neighbouring village, advised Mr. Soulby to send Betsy away. Mr. Soulby did as he suggested, and after Betsy had left the cottage there were no more disturbances.

This leads one to suppose that Betsy was in some way responsible for the disturbances. Possibly she had a peculiar attraction for a certain species of spirits; or there was in her a force or element

which at times she was unable to control, and which had to find a field for its pent-up activity.

The following rather more unusual case of noisy and violent ghostly happenings is taken from an old manuscript of the 17th century:[1]

In 1679 the house of Mr. William Morse, of Newbury, Berkshire, was infested with demons. A long staff danced up and down in a chimney, and was afterwards hung upon a line and swung to and fro; an iron crook was hurled about by an invisible hand, a chair flew about a room and alighted on a table. A chest was carried from one place to another; a door was barricaded; and the keys of the house were taken off the bunch and flung about, making a loud noise.

A little boy was the chief sufferer. He was flung about with such violence that his friends feared his brains would be dashed out. His bedclothes were pulled off his bed, and his bed was shaken. A man tried to hold him down in a chair; his efforts, however, were in vain, for the boy was raised constantly up and then thrust forcibly down, while the chair kept moving about the room apparently of its own accord. When the chair finally became stationary, the boy was taken out of it by an invisible agency and thrown across the floor to within a few feet of the fire. He was pricked on the back, and knives were stuck into him. The spectators pulled the knives out of his body, which was unharmed. Sometimes he barked like a dog, and sometimes clucked like a hen.

It was after this extraordinary behaviour on his part that the apparition of a black boy was seen, not only individually but collectively. The advent of the spectre was accompanied by violent drumming and thumping on a table. After these demonstrations a ghostly voice exclaimed, "Revenge, sweet revenge." The listeners besought God to protect them against the evil spirits present, whereupon the same ghostly voice cried: "Alas! alas! We are cast out. We knock and demonstrate no more." After that the phenomenal disturbances in the house ceased.

Provided the case is in the main true it is of peculiar interest, inasmuch as it proves that spirits are sometimes, at any rate, definitely present during disturbances of a poltergeist character, and very probably are the sole cause of them.

It certainly seemed so in a case of noisy and dangerous happenings in 1852 in Blackley. In the autumn of that year the landlord of

[1] Vide *More Glimpses of the World Unseen*, by the Rev. F. G. Lee.

the popular village inn was a clogger named William Whitehead. He had been living quite peacefully in the house for fully ten months before anything disturbing occurred. According to his statements, he was on the ground floor of the house one day, probably in the tap-room, when he heard a sound like the whistling of a railway engine.

He went into a back room, from which the sound seemed to come, and heard a loud cackling. He searched the room without discovering any hen in it. He trod on a certain flagstone, and immediately there were terrific screams, which ceased directly he stepped off the stone. Other members of the family, who came running to the room on hearing the screaming, trod on the stone, and the same thing happened.

He removed the flagstone and after digging for some time found a large jar filled with lime and bones. A village conference was held, and several people who examined the bones believed that they were the bones of a human being who had been murdered in the house many years ago.

The disturbances continued and became more and more incessant. The most harrowing screaming and hoarse cackling was heard every night in the week and sometimes during the day. Some of the oldest inhabitants of Blackley declared that the ghost of Mrs. Shaw, who had formerly lived in the Old Hall, which stood near the inn, was the cause of the disturbances; other people said that the haunting was due to the depravity of certain persons in the village, who spent too much of their time in the inn. An old man named George Horroc, who once lived in the inn, said that on two occasions he saw the ghost, which was in the form of a young woman and made noises like the "rumbling of stones".

Many people visited the house, and efforts to lay the ghost proved of no avail. It sometimes did dangerous things. On one occasion it lifted a kettle full of boiling water from the kitchen fire and set it on the floor, in a place where people were most likely to fall over it. The inn was known to have been haunted for at least eighty-five years.

Whether the Whiteheads remained in it or were forced to leave owing to the disturbances, I have not been able to ascertain. There was no further reference to it in the local Press.

Another haunting which was of a violent description, but hardly comes within the category of poltergeist phenomena, is mentioned in *All the Year Round*.[1]

[1] 1871.

In the year 1868 Mr. Ronaldson read in a newspaper that there was a furnished house to let about ten miles from London. He applied at once for permission to view it. It was a picturesque old building, with extensive wooded grounds occupying an isolated and lonely position. He was charmed with its appearance, situation and interior, especially with one large bedroom. He decided to rent the house, and having signed an agreement and made all the necessary arrangements, he took up his abode there.

He engaged the woman who had been acting as caretaker as his housekeeper. She begged him not to sleep in the room that he had liked so much. She told him that it was damp and that the bed-linen had not been sufficiently aired. She suggested that he should sleep at an inn in the nearest village, until she had got another bedroom ready for him.

The objections she raised to his sleeping in the large room roused his suspicions, and made him all the more determined to occupy it. Eventually she gave way. After he had the supper which she prepared for him, he strolled about the grounds for a short time.

When he returned to the house he found the housekeeper lighting a number of candles in his bedroom. He told her that he did not want so many candles, that it was quite an unnecessary expenditure.

She appeared to be greatly concerned, and implored him to keep them burning all night. He promised that he would do so, in order to appease her, but directly she had left the room he extinguished all the candles except one, and he blew that one out as soon as he was in bed.

Try how he would he could not go to sleep. In spite of the woman's warning, the bed felt warm and comfortable. He was tired after his journey, and yet something kept him awake. He resorted to various devices to make him drowsy, but it was all to no purpose; he just could not sleep. Suddenly, much to his surprise, he heard murmuring. He strained his ears and listened. It was no fancy. There were voices. They ceased to murmur, and developed into the gruff voices of men engaged in a violent quarrel. There were many oaths and much foul language. Ronaldson got up and lit a candle. The voices at once ceased, and there was absolute silence.

Considerably shocked and mystified, and not a little frightened, Ronaldson got back into bed and blew out the candle.

The voices began again at once, and were accompanied by tramping and scurrying of feet, heavy breathing and gasping and sounds of savage blows. A desperate fight was seemingly in progress in Ronaldson's room. The imprecations used suggested that it was the re-enaction of a fight to the death, which had taken place very many years ago. The cries and groans that succeeded the sounds of struggling were of the most appalling description.

Ronaldson was shocked into a state of unconsciousness. When he recovered everywhere was still, and the dawn was breaking. As a result of his harrowing experience during the night, he had brain fever and lay between life and death for many weeks. He recovered eventually and made exhaustive enquiries regarding the haunting. He was unsuccessful. The housekeeper and the agent for the property either could not or would not tell him anything, and he fared the same with everyone whom he questioned.

CHRISTMAS AND NOISY GHOSTS

SOME years ago Badenoch, near Blair Athole, harboured more than one ghost. A Badenoch woman married a Bonskeid man and went to that place to live with him. She brought with her servants, who were also natives of Badenoch, and either she or they brought with them one or more of the Badenoch ghosts, for soon after they came to the house at Bonskeid supernatural disturbances commenced.

Turnips were thrown about the kitchen by invisible hands, candles were mysteriously blown out. A spinning-wheel was seen to come downstairs and fall to pieces in a room on the ground floor No sooner was it put together than it walked upstairs impelled by no visible hands, and then came down again and fell to pieces as before. The owner of the house was standing in a room with a lighted candle in his hand when a potato was thrown at him. It hit him and extinguished the candle. He heard one of the servants laughing at him, and sent her and the other servants who had accompanied his wife back to Badenoch, and there were no more disturbances.[1]

The road from the wood of Nant to Kilchrenan on Lochaweside was haunted not very long ago by a black shadow. People who

[1] *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, by J. G. Campbell.

walked along the road on a fine moonlit night saw two shadows moving alongside them; one of the shadows resembled one of them, the other shadow was that of a queer little man with a very big head and a hump on his back. He was called Bodach Beag Chill-a-Chrevnain.

Phantom cats would seem to be more plentiful in Scotland than in other countries. A loch in the north of Tiree was haunted by a swarm of howling cats, and some years ago several houses in Dundee and Aberdeen were rumoured to be troubled at times by ghost cats that had the unpleasant habit of jumping on beds at night.

I have heard of more than one alleged haunting in Inverary. The fishermen there were troubled at one time by a ghost that interfered with their nets, and a place near Appin was haunted by a ghost with arms like bags of wool that on one occasion was seen to attack a man.

One of the worst reputed haunted out-door places in Scotland is in Skye. Horrible forms are seen and sounds of gurgling and throttling are heard on a lonely road in the vicinity of Portree. It takes a very brave man to go along that road alone at night. Most people avoid it even in the twilight.

There is a superstition still extant in the West of Scotland that if you wish to see the person who is destined to figure prominently in your life within the next twelve months, you have only to peer through the window of the dining-room of your house at midnight on Christmas Eve and you will see, standing behind the chair on which you are accustomed to sit, the shadowy figure of such an individual.

Relative to this superstition there is the following story.[1] Two people from Glasgow were spending Christmas week in a quaint old hotel near Loch Fyne. Desirous of putting this superstition to the test, they stole quietly out of the hotel at midnight and peered through the window of the dining-room, which was dark and deserted. Nothing happening, they were about to come away disappointed when the door of the dining-room suddenly opened and a tall man, dressed according to the mode prevalent about the middle of the 18th century, entered, carrying a lighted candle in one hand and in the other hand a pistol. Placing the pistol on the long table in the centre of the room, he examined it closely, and then, raising it to his head, he pulled the trigger. There was a loud report, a

[1] *The Weekly Scotsman*, Christmas Number, 1925.

blinding flash, and the room was plunged into darkness. The man and candle vanished.

Badly scared, the two visitors ran into the hotel expecting to find its inmates alarmed and probably panic-stricken; to their great surprise, however, no one was astir, and the house was wrapped in silence.

They saw the night porter and told him what had happened. He said that he had not heard any sound and persisted that they must have imagined that they had seen a man shoot himself, that there was no such man in the hotel. In the morning they sought the landlord and told him what they had witnessed.

He was rude at first, but when they threatened to leave the hotel at once he became apologetic, and informed them that the hotel had been haunted for a long time by the ghost of a gentleman who was believed to have committed suicide in the dining-room one Christmas Eve about the middle of the 18th century. He said that the ghost only appeared on the anniversary of the suicide, and that only the people who actually saw it heard the report of the shot. He begged the two visitors not to tell the other guests as, should they tell them, it might injure his business. The two visitors promised not to say a word, but their nerves were so badly shaken that they left the hotel the following day.

The Ford of Ath-Fleodair, near Loch Maddy in North Uist, has long been reputed to be haunted, chiefly on Hallowe'en and Christmas. Gruesome lights and terrifying forms, bearing no resemblance to anything of this world, are seen there.

Another Christmas haunting is at a crossroad north of Argyll. A party of revellers were driving by the crossroad on Christmas Eve when their horses shied, and they saw lying on the ground a very tall woman with a white shawl wrapped round her head. Greatly alarmed, they got out of the carriage, only to discover to their astonishment that the woman had vanished and was not to be seen anywhere.

When they told the people with whom they were spending Christmas about their strange experience they were informed that the crossroad was well known to be haunted by the ghost of Brown Maggie, a woman who had murdered an old man in a particularly cruel manner, and had been gibbeted at the crossroad in the 18th or early 19th century.[1]

[1] *The Weekly Scotsman*, Christmas Number, 1925.

THE VENGEANCE OF GHOSTS

He became pale and said: "You have seen the evil genius of our house. Her history is this: one of my ancestors fell in love with a beautiful girl of humble birth. They became engaged and were about to be married, when the girl suddenly disappeared and was never seen or heard of again. It was supposed that she had been murdered by a relative of my ancestor, who strongly disapproved of the marriage.

"From time immemorial there had been preserved in our family two silver bracelets, such as you describe, with which our chiefs betrothed their brides. It was believed that my ancestor had given one of the bracelets to the girl he intended to marry. Ever since she vanished her ghost has always appeared, wearing the silver bracelet, prior to the death of a member of my family."

Her advent on this occasion prognosticated his own death, which occurred within a short time of her appearance at the hall window.

THE VENGEANCE OF GHOSTS (CONTINUED)

JAMES GRANT in his book *The Mysteries of All Nations* relates the traditional Italian ghost story of the haunting of a murderer by his victim.

Carlo Stella, a handsome, unscrupulous, predatory young Italian of low extraction, chanced one day to render service to the gay and fashionable Baron Cattaneo. Learning that the Baron was reputed to be very wealthy, Stella lost no time in ingratiating himself with Cattaneo and cultivating his friendship. Night after night he induced the Baron to drink heavily and play cards with him for ever-increasing stakes, and finally got him to stake everything he possessed. Stella won; he always won. He took care to get the Baron's signature to a documentary conveyance while Cattaneo was still under the influence of drink.

The following day the Baron was found dead, shot through the head. Stella, by virtue of the deed of conveyance, acquired all the Baron's land and money. He was suspected of murdering the Baron, but as nothing definite was proved against him, he escaped arrest. He soon afterwards became engaged to the beautiful widow of an Italian nobleman.

At the hour appointed for their marriage, when the bridal party were all seated in the church, a tall, heavily cloaked man,

with a ghastly wound in his face, strode noiselessly up the central aisle, stood for a few moments gazing sternly at Stella, who fainted, and then as silently left the building. Whither he went no one knew. The marriage was postponed until the following evening. Once again the bridal party assembled in the church, and the service was about to commence when the same tall, blood-stained man entered the building. This time he strode right up to Stella, who regarded him with horror, and whispered in his ear. He then turned down one of the side aisles and mysteriously disappeared. Stella again fainted. The bride and everyone who had come to witness the ceremony were terrified, and hurriedly left the church. The next day the widow broke off her engagement to Stella.

He was awakened every night by unearthly ghastly sounds in his room, and was horribly conscious of something very dreadful bending menacingly over him. He dared not open his eyes or stir until it was daylight. He was tormented to such a degree that he besought a woman who lived in a cottage near his estate, and was reputed to be a seer and to be able to conjure up spirits at will, to do her utmost to rid him of the evil spirit that was haunting him. She promised to do her best, took the money he gave her, spat on it, put it in a weasel-skin purse and then into her pocket.

Muttering what Stella supposed was an incantation appropriate for the occasion, she threw some powder out of a black oak box into the fire. Presently a tall, cylindrical blue light rose from the floor in front of Stella, and a voice, apparently proceeding from it, exclaimed: "Murderer, you will be freed from me for two days. On the third day from now we shall meet again." Directly these ominous words had been pronounced the light vanished.

The extreme eeriness of the visual and auditory phenomena appalled Stella. He fully believed that they were supernatural and due to the presence in the room of the murdered Baron.

Greatly perturbed he left the cottage and returned home. He kept a light burning in his room all night, and had two armed servants stationed on the landing outside his room, with strict injunctions to come to him at once should he summon them.

About noon on the third day after his visit to the reputed seer two of his acquaintances, who were on the bank of the river adjoining his estate, saw him careering wildly towards them on his favourite black horse. As he drew nearer they perceived that his face was convulsed with terror. They moved quickly to one side as he dashed by them and plunged over the steep bank into the river.

They saw nothing to account for his extreme terror but they distinctly felt something, accompanied by a cold current of air, which passed them as if in hot pursuit of him. For some moments they were too frightened to do anything, and when they had recovered sufficiently to scramble down the steep bank and peer into the deep, swift-flowing river, they saw no sign of Stella or his horse. His body was not recovered for some days.

Many people who believed that he had murdered Baron Cattaneo, and that he was guilty of other crimes too, attributed his strange tragic end to supernatural agency.

HAUNTED GRAVES AND COFFINS

THE following circumstances of intense hatred of a person being a probable cause of a violent haunting derives its authenticity from an 18th-century manuscript:[1]

About the middle of the 18th century there was living alone at an old country hall in Lincolnshire an elderly squire. The house, which had once been full of life and gaiety, had become the abode of gloom and sadness, owing to the death of the squire's wife and daughter, who was sole heiress of all his possessions.

The bodies of the lady and her daughter were deposited in the family vault amid the lamentations of the squire, who was heartbroken, and of the villagers, by whom the deceased ladies were highly esteemed.

For some years the squire's only brother had lived at the hall. He had left it on account of the animosity that he had manifested towards the squire's wife, who reciprocated his sentiment but in a less blatantly aggressive manner.

Because of the feud that existed between the two persons the squire had had no intercourse whatsoever with his brother, after the latter had left the hall.

Some months after the deaths of the squire's wife and daughter the rector of the village, who had been a great friend of the family for many years, contrived to bring about a reconciliation between the squire and his brother, with the result that the latter returned to the hall. One condition was made, namely that there should never be any allusion to the deceased sister-in-law.

[1] *Glimpses in the Twilight*, by the Rev. F. G. Lee, D.D. Published 1885. Blackwood & Sons.

A year after the reconciliation had taken place between the two men a malignant fever broke out in the village. Among its victims was the squire's brother. Shortly before he died the rector begged him to forgive his sister-in-law for anything that she may have done to offend or harm him. His efforts were fruitless. His prayers only incensed the dying man, who sat up in bed and exclaimed, "I know that I am dying; if, when I am dead, you dare to bury me in the family vault with that accursed woman, the living as well as the dead shall hear of me." He fell back with a frightful imprecation on his lips, and expired.

The rector was immeasurably shocked. He did not suppose for one moment that the dying man could carry out his threat, and he deemed it wise to make no allusion to it either to the squire or to anyone else. The body of the dead man, after lying in state for several days, was consigned to the family vault in the churchyard, and placed next to the coffins of the squire's wife and daughter.

That night the villagers living near the church were alarmed by fearful shrieks and cries coming from the churchyard. It seemed as though a desperate struggle was taking place between two or more people.

The rector, to whom the extraordinary occurrence in the night was reported, told the squire about his brother's dying threat, and suggested the immediate opening of the vault. When this was done an astounding spectacle was disclosed. The coffins of the squire's wife and daughter were lying in a far corner of the vault, the girl's coffin across the coffin of her mother, as if to protect it. "Close to them, standing not as deposited but erect and menacing, was the coffin of the squire's brother, which had so recently and decorously been placed upon black trestles." The coffins were restored to their original places, and the vault was again closed.

That night the noises in the vault were even louder than previously. The sounds of blows and shrieks of pain and terror appalled the villagers, who were keeping watch on the churchyard to prevent the possibility of tricksters. The nocturnal disturbances continued with unabated frightfulness until the squire, at the advice of one of his friends, had a strong brick wall made in the vault to separate the coffins of his wife and daughter from the coffin of his brother. This had the desired effect. The noises ceased, and the coffins remained undisturbed.

Another case of ghostly disturbances in a churchyard is related in the same book. A youth named Robert Baty expressed a wish

more than once that he should be buried within the Church of Arthuret, in the North of England, in which for several generations members of his mother's family, the Grahams of Grahamshill, had been interred. He was accidentally drowned on August 12, 1680, when little more than twenty-three years of age. Unexpected circumstances prevented his nearest kinsfolk obeying his injunctions relative to the burial place of his body. It was interred without and not within Arthuret Church.

On the night after his funeral his ghost appeared to his youngest sister, Mary, and upbraided her for not having regarded his wishes. She was not at all frightened, and calmly told the apparition that the place of burial had not been chosen by her but by other people. The ghost threatened to molest the people who had disregarded his wishes until they had his body removed and put in the church. Mary assured him that she would do all she could in the matter.

The following morning some agricultural labourers, who were passing through the churchyard on their way to work, found Baty's grave disturbed; all the earth which covered the coffin had been thrown out, and the coffin was exposed to their view. They informed the rector. He had the grave filled in and employed people to keep watch in the churchyard. The watching, however, was of no avail. On two succeeding nights the earth was thrown out of the grave, and the coffin again exposed to view.

Mary, who was much alarmed at these occurrences, implored her kinsfolk to do everything in their power with regard to the fulfilment of her brother's wishes. "A faculty was obtained from York, where the Archbishop's Court was held, authorizing the removal of Baty's body to the family vault within the church." Soon after this was done the ghost of Robert Baty appeared again to Mary, and informed her that it was now at rest, and that there would be no more alarming occurrences.

ISLAND, SEA AND CAVE HAUNTINGS

ISLE OF MAN HORRORS

In no part of the British Isles are legends and traditional stories of hauntings more numerous than in the Isle of Man. Many of them are associated with Peele Castle; one of the ghosts which is said to haunt it is the notorious Manthe Doog or phantom in the form of a shaggy dog with evil glaring eyes.

Waldron, the famous Manxland historian, says that an apparition called the Manthe Doog haunted all parts of Peele Castle, but particularly the guardroom, to which it would constantly come and lie down by the fire. The soldiers on duty there were so accustomed to seeing it that they ceased to be greatly alarmed by it, but as they believed it to be an evil spirit, waiting for an opportunity to injure them, they refrained from swearing and using foul language in its presence. None of them liked to be left alone with it, or to go alone during the night along the passage through the church to deliver the keys of the Castle to the Governor or his substitute.

One night a soldier, who had been drinking somewhat heavily, declared that he was not in the least degree afraid of any ghost and would go alone with the keys. Soon after he had started, his comrades in the guardroom heard the most unearthly sounds, and presently he returned, ghastly white and too overcome with terror to say what had happened. He died in violent agony. After this no one would venture in the passage at night, and consequently it was sealed.

Waldron asserts that he heard the truth of the story vouched for by several people. One of them was an old soldier, who said that he had seen the phantom dog many times. Although the passage was sealed, rumour asserts that the Manthe Doog still haunts the ancient ruin.

Many stories and legends of ghostly and mysterious happenings are also associated with Rushen Castle, formerly the palace of the kings of Manxland, and for many years the prison of the island.[1] According to Waldron there were said to be magnificent houses under Rushen Castle. Several men, he states, ventured to explore the subterranean region in ages past but none of them ever returned to give an account of what they saw. In more recent times a man

[1] Until 1890.

possessed of more than ordinary courage and resolution begged permission to explore under the castle. He obtained leave of the Governor, went down and returned by the aid of the pack-thread which he had providentially taken with him.

He told an astounding story. He said that after he had passed through the vaults directly underneath the castle he found himself in a long, dank and dark passage. When he had gone along it for about a mile he came to a magnificent house which was illuminated with many candles. Having fortified himself with the brandy which he had brought with him, he summoned up the courage to knock at the front door of the building.

The door was immediately opened by a servant in gorgeous livery, who asked him what he wanted. He explained that he was anxious to reach the extremity of the subterranean domain but there were so many passages ahead of him that he did not know which was the right one to take. The servant very obligingly showed him the way.

When he had gone a considerable distance he came to a house even more magnificent than the first one. All the windows were wide open, and there were lamps burning in every room. He peered into one of the rooms and saw a hideous monster of at least fourteen feet in height and twelve feet round the body lying on a table in the middle of the floor. Its head was on a cushion, and it was holding a sword in one of its huge, hairy, clenched hands.

The sight so appalled the explorer that he turned tail and made no attempt to proceed any further. On his way back he stopped at the first house he had seen, and the polite servant told him that if he had entered the second house he would have been killed. He asked the servant the name of the monster and who owned the house. The servant would not tell him, and advised him to return to the castle as quickly as possible and never to attempt to explore the subterranean regions again. He took the servant's advice and hastened home.

The monster which he had seen was believed to be one of the semi-human giants expelled from Wales by the great prophet and enchanter Merlin. Incredible as Waldron's story may seem it was credited in Manxland for many years.

NASTY SEA PHANTOMS

SOME of the most dangerous ghosts haunt ships and the seashore. In Sandy's *Ovid*, 1632,[1] there is a tale of an old Bristol seaman, who saw the ghosts of four dreadful-looking Bristol witches playing at dice in the cockpit of his ship, while it was at Gibraltar. When the ship weighed anchor, they sprinkled magic powder to prevent it sailing, and made hideous grimaces and flew at the seaman and scratched his face with their long nails when he entered the cockpit. It was not until a priest was summoned that they ceased to haunt the ship.

One of the worst haunted places in the world would seem to be in the vicinity of Marblehead. The shore of Oakum Bay, near Marblehead, is haunted by the ghost of a lovely Spanish woman, who was barbarously murdered by pirates in the 17th century. She is not dangerous but the ghosts of her murderers that hover near the scene of her death are dangerous, inasmuch as they are evil and contaminate the atmosphere. Whittier in one of his poems alludes to them thus:

'Tis said that often when the moon
Is struggling with the gloomy even,
And over moon and star is drawn
The autumn of a clouded heaven,
Strange sounds swell up the narrow glen,
As if that robber crew were there,
The hellish laughter, the shouts of men,
And woman's dying prayer.

Drake in his *Legends of New England* says the ghost of the Spanish lady still haunts Oakum Bay, and was seen in the last century by a well-known legal gentleman.

Another badly haunted place in the New World is Sable Island. Gruesome lights and the hideous ghosts of the murderers of a lady passenger on the transport ship *Amelie* are seen there. Like the ghosts of Oakum Bay they terrify all who have the misfortune to contact them.

In an article entitled "Fish and Men in the Maine Islands" in *Harper's Magazine*, May, 1880, Mr. W. H. Bishop tells the story

[1] See also "Strange Sea Phantoms", anonymous, in *Translated from the German.*

of the haunting of the ship *Hascall*, which broke its moorings on St. George's Bank and collided with and sank the *Andrew Johnson*. All the men in the *Andrew Johnson* were drowned. For years afterwards the ghosts of the drowned men used to rise from the water, come on board the *Hascall* and fish over the side of the ship. So terrified were sailors at the appearance of these gruesome spectres that no crew could be found to sail on the *Hascall*, and the vessel was finally abandoned and broken up.

In 1893 there was lying in a dock at Bathurst, Newfoundland, a trading vessel named the *Squando*. No crew would man her. Owing to certain terrible happenings that had occurred on board her she had acquired an evil reputation. How it all began no one knew. Her history appears to have been tolerably uneventful up to the year 1889, when she was lying at anchorage in San Francisco Bay.

The captain's wife fell violently in love with the first mate, who was a handsome fellow, and because he did not respond to her advances, and exhibited rather too openly a distaste for them, she told her husband that he had been trying to seduce her. The captain believed her, and they both went into the mate's cabin one night and murdered him. The woman held the mate's arms while the captain cut his throat and severed his head from his body. They threw the body overboard.

That was the first known tragedy on board the *Squando*. The next captain of the ship was killed in a mutiny, and the two succeeding captains died mysteriously in it. After the death of the last captain no one would sail in the *Squando*.

The Norwegian consul at Bathurst employed two watchmen to stay on board the vessel during the night. They stayed one night but refused to stay another. They said that during the night cold hands touched them and caught hold of their clothes; that things had been flung at them and about the deck by invisible beings; that voices had repeatedly ordered them to leave the ship, and that they had seen the ghost of a man covered with blood and without a head.

Other watchmen, who were bribed to spend a night on the *Squando*, told a similar tale, and likewise refused to stay another night on the ship. She ultimately experienced the same fate as the *Hascall*, and was abandoned and broken up.

In the autumn of 1894 I sailed from New York to Southampton in the German liner *Elbe*. A steward on board her told me that none

of the crew liked to go into one of the cabins, because on several occasions a dreadful face had been seen pressed against the port-hole. Soon after I had sailed in her the *Elbe* collided with a ship in the North Sea, and sank with nearly all on board it.

On the morning of March 21, 1860, a boat containing three men came to a standstill in the bay off Staten Island, New York.[1] The men rested on their oars and stared at an oyster sloop that was a little distance from them, and commented on her odd appearance and behaviour. Her sails were torn and hanging over her side, and she was drifting aimlessly along, as if the man at her helm was either absent or asleep.

"Better get a little nearer, I reckon," one of the men in the boat said. "Something's wrong."

His companions agreed, and plying their oars, they rowed vigorously towards the strange little ship. Presently one of them, peering forward, said: "The *E. A. Johnson.* That's her name. I can see it distinctly. Ain't she Burr's boat, from Islip, Long Island?"

"Burr's boat right enough," the man who had spoken first replied. "I wonder can anything be amiss with the old guy."

He leaned forward, one hand still on the rudder, and gazed earnestly at the sloop. Then he shouted: "Ship ahoy! You there!" There was no reply. "Ship ahoy!" he yelled again, and again there was no answer.

They were close alongside the sloop, and in another minute all three men were on her deck. An uncanny silence greeted them, and what they saw made them start back in horror. The deck was a shambles. On the sails, mast, stove and companion hatch there was blood, blood everywhere, while on the starboard quarter was the imprint of a bloody hand. It seemed to move as they stared at it. It was the same below deck, whither all three men went with faltering steps, keeping close to one another.

All was in confusion. Everything was saturated with blood. There was an unbroken line of blood from the cabin to the guards, and on the guards were marks of a hatchet and another imprint of a bloody hand. There was something horribly sinister about it, and like the other imprint it seemed to move as they looked at it. It made them creep. A hammer, about three pounds in weight, covered with blood and hair, was lying in a corner.

"Well, this licks creation!" one of the men exclaimed, after they had stood for a while gazing in horror at the ghastly, gory

[1] *News of the World*, April 8, 1860, and June 24, 1860.

scene. "To account for all this blood, I reckon a whole crew must have been butchered. But who can have done it and where are the bodies?"

They looked at one another with awe-stricken faces and continued to search. At every step they took there were signs of a struggle, deep cuts in the woodwork, and more pools of blood. There was evidence that the murderer or murderers had met with some resistance, that a terrible fight had taken place, and that robbery was probably the motive for the murders, as chests and boxes had been broken open, and their contents scattered about the floor.

The three men, although they looked everywhere, were unable to find any bodies, and at last satisfied that it was useless to search any longer, they proceeded to tow the sloop to the shore. When they arrived they told their story and handed over the *E. A. Johnson* into the custody of the New York Harbour authorities.

News that a horrible massacre had taken place on a Long Island ship spread far and wide, and New York papers soon had startling headlines about the murders on the *E. A. Johnson*, while reporters besieged the quays, seeking the latest news. There was little, however, to tell at first beyond the already described discovery.

The *E. A. Johnson* had left Port Key on Sunday, March 18, under the command of Captain Burr, who had with him a crew of three men, the two brothers Watts and a man named Hicks. Burr, who was about thirty-four years of age, was much respected on Long Island, where he was regarded as a man of some means. In addition to being the skipper of the *E. A. Johnson*, he also owned the sloop. The brothers Watts also bore good reputations, but apparently little was known about Hicks.

After the *E. A. Johnson* left port on the day named, nothing was seen or heard of her until an early hour on the morning of March 21, when a schooner collided with her near Staten Island. She then appeared to be very unmanageable—indeed the collision, fortunately not serious, was entirely due to her erratic behaviour. Only one man was visible on her deck, and the moment the collision occurred he was observed, greatly to the astonishment of those on board the schooner, to run to her bows, where he mysteriously disappeared.

The captain of the schooner, having satisfied himself that neither of the vessels had incurred any damage, went on his way. He thought that the behaviour of the *E. A. Johnson* was rather

extraordinary but never suspected that there was anything seriously amiss with her. About an hour later she was found abandoned by the three men in the boat. What in the meantime had become of the man in the bows was a mystery.

For some reason which the Press either could not or would not divulge, Hicks was suspected from the very first, and on the police going to his lodgings and finding there Captain Burr's watch and things belonging to the Wattses, he was searched for, found, charged with murdering Burr and the two Wattses, and imprisoned. He at once admitted his guilt, and declared that he had been urged to kill the three men by an evil spirit that had given him no peace until he committed the murders. He described the spirit, and said that it had followed him to the sloop from the *Saladin*, a vessel on board which there had been a mutiny, accompanied by much bloodshed.

If what he said was true he must have been known by another name, because there was no Hicks on the *Saladin* at the time of the mutiny, in which he declared the evil spirit had made him participate. His confession was remarkable. The following is an extract from it:

> "On the night of March 20 there were five people on board the *E. A. Johnson*, namely, Burr, the two Watts, myself and the evil spirit. It was between 9 and 10 o'clock; one of the Watts brothers was in the bows, when my companion, the evil spirit, who was at my elbow, told me to get ready. I seized a heavy instrument and, accompanied by the evil spirit, crept into the bows. Watts was busily occupied scanning the water in front of the vessel, and the evil spirit and I taking him unawares, despatched him with blows on the head."

Hicks proceeded to describe the other two murders. The other brother Watts, who was below deck with the captain, gave no trouble, but the captain, who was a powerful man, fought desperately. Hicks succeeded in killing him, and threw the bodies of his victims into the sea. He was tried, found guilty and executed. It was estimated that at least 10,000 witnessed the execution.

The sloop in which the murders had been committed was declared to be haunted by the ghost of Hicks and his evil spirit companion, and such dreadful sounds were heard proceeding from it nightly that it was ultimately demolished.

MORE NASTY SEA GHOSTS

THE sea figures many times in the ghost-lore of Scotland. The Rev. Walter Gregor in his book *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the North-East of Scotland* relates the case of an apparition appearing to the crew of a ship somewhere off the Scottish coast.

A Scotch sailor, for some unknown reason, murdered his lady love and, in order to evade arrest, joined the crew of a ship that was about to sail for some distant port.

One stormy night soon after the ship had started on her voyage, and was still almost within sight of the Scottish shore, the man who was on the look-out saw a strange light in the distance. He at once reported it to the officer on deck, and soon everyone on board the vessel was watching it, wondering what it could be, as it was not like a ship's light. It gradually drew nearer and nearer until it was close to the ship, when it assumed the form of a lovely golden-haired girl, clad in a gleaming white robe.

She stepped lightly and gracefully on to the bulwark of the ship, and pointing at the trembling murderer, accused him of having killed her and bade him come to her. For a moment or two he stood rooted to the deck, too overcome with surprise and horror to move or utter a sound, and then, ghastly pale and with a look of terror in his eyes, he obeyed her summons. Regarding him reproachfully, she clasped him in her arms and dragged him with her over the side of the ship and out of sight of the appalled crew.

Phantom ships are not confined to African waters, as was the phantom ship of Captain Marryat; they haunt the seas in all parts of the world. There is hardly a maritime nation that has not got its spectral bark. Scotch sailors still have their stories of phantom vessels that have been seen at times off the coasts of Scotland.

One such story is of a phantom ship that appears in the Solway immediately before a wreck in that water. It is supposed to be the phantom of a vessel containing a bridal party that was maliciously wrecked in the Solway many years ago.

A Highland legend records how a large sailing ship, the *Rotterdam*, went down with all hands off the coast of Scotland, and how ever afterwards the phantom of that ship has appeared in Scottish waters prior to a big maritime disaster.

Cunningham in his *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry* gives a graphic account of two phantom pirate ships that haunt the Firth of Forth. The story goes that two Danish pirate ships terrorized for a long time the North Sea. Peaceful vessels were seized by the pirates, and all on board them horribly murdered. At last the day of retribution came. The pirate ships were wrecked in a great storm, and all on board them perished. For their many evil deeds the pirates were doomed to haunt the North Sea to the Day of Judgment. On the anniversary of their destruction the phantoms of the pirate ships, enveloped in an eerie light, appear in the Firth of Forth. Their appearance always entails bad luck on those who have the misfortune to see them. Luckily, few people possess that faculty.

An elderly reader of my books told me that when she was a girl she often stayed with some of her relations, who lived near Arbroath. In the summer she used to go to Lunan Bay with them, and if the sea was not too rough she visited the caves.

An old boatman told her that he had seen strange sights in the Bay. On one occasion he and several other men were standing on the shore talking, when they saw a large ship about a mile distant. Although the sea was not very rough she was plunging and rolling as if in the throes of a violent storm. They could tell by her build that she was not a British ship, but they could see no indication of her nationality. She seemed to be in distress, and they were wondering what they ought to do about it when she suddenly vanished. They rowed out to about where they had seen her vanish, but there was no trace of any ship. No bodies and no wreckage from the ship were ever found, and no vessel of her size was reported missing. She was a phantom ship, and a wreck occurred in the Bay soon after her appearance. She was always regarded as the inevitable harbinger of a bad maritime calamity.

The boatman and his brother were on the beach one evening, when they heard a strange voice from the sea call out the names of three men whom they knew. Within a few days the three men died. Two were drowned and the third man met with a fatal accident.

On another occasion the boatman was alone in his boat one night, some little distance from the shore, when he suddenly saw a strange man in seaman's clothes, sitting in the bow of the boat, gazing earnestly at him. The man was ghastly pale, and there was a dreadful wound on one side of his face.

"Tell my sister Mary Smith, who lives in Arbroath," the

strange man said, "that she must on no account marry Andrew.[1] He is no good."

"Andrew whom?" the boatman asked.

There was no reply. The strange man had vanished.

The boatman hunted for Mary Smiths in Arbroath and discovered several, but only one of them had a brother. This Mary Smith was contemplating marrying a man named Andrew, who bore an excellent character, but when she heard the boatman's strange story and found that his description of the apparition he had seen in his boat tallied with that of her brother, Keith, who was reported to have been lost at sea, she broke off her engagement to Andrew. She had always been influenced by Keith, although he had never been very kind to her and was generally regarded as a ne'er-do-well. He had never liked Andrew, who had disapproved of his conduct.

The boatman's tale interested me because I had so seldom heard of a ghost speaking.

THE HAUNTED ORKNEYS

THERE are innumerable legends and traditional stories about the Island of Rousay, which is separated from the mainland of Orkney by a narrow strait. At a certain hour of the day two tides meet in the strait in a furious whirl of foam and spray that means instant destruction to any very small craft that ventures in that water.

One traditional story of the strait is about a young fisherman who was madly in love with an Orkney girl, the daughter of a native of Skye, who was gifted with second sight.

The girl declared that she would not marry him unless he proved his love for her by sailing through the strait alone in a frail craft at the hour when the tides met at the place known as the Enhallow Roust. The girl's father told her that he had a vision, in which he saw the young man's boat overturned in the strait and the young man drowned, and begged her to stop the young man from attempting such a perilous feat.

She refused to listen to him, and warned the young man that unless he imperilled his life for her sake she would marry his rival, the son of a Wick tradesman. Unable to brook the idea of her

[1] Not the real name. All names in this story are fictitious.

and walked inland. After they had gone a little way they realized that they were not on Enhallow Island, but in some quite unfamiliar country.

Presently they came to a large house, illuminated by many candles. A tall, beautifully dressed woman appeared in the open doorway of the house and beckoned to them. To their amazement she was their missing daughter. She invited them into the house, gave them a splendid repast, and told them that she was comfortably married and living on an island that was not to be found on any chart.

While she was talking to them a great brown wisp[1] rolled through the room and into the adjoining kitchen. Immediately afterwards the husband of their daughter, a tall, handsome young man, came into the room from an inner chamber and warmly welcomed them. When they were leaving they asked their daughter to return to her old home with them. She refused, saying that she was far too happy with her husband. She gave her father a knife, and told him that while he kept it his fishing would never fail, and he would be able to visit her whenever he wished. After a tender farewell the girl's parents once again put to sea. On their way home the old man accidentally dropped the knife overboard.

Ill luck followed. His fishing never prospered, and although he tried many times to locate the island on which his daughter lived so happily, neither he nor anyone else was ever able to find a trace of it.

There are many stories and legends about the Standing Stones of Stennis, in Orkney. They stand in a circle in the middle of a lonely moor. Antiquarians try to account for their presence there, but there is no record or clue of any kind to help them. Whence they came and what they signify are insoluble mysteries.

All over the island there are traces of an ancient tribe who lived in brochs or semi-subterranean dwelling-places. Harrowing sounds are sometimes heard coming from the brochs, and nude forms, that bear little resemblance to present-day human beings, are seen gliding around in close proximity to the brochs.

A party of tourists is said to have visited Stennis Isle one summer afternoon in order to see the Standing Stones, about which they had heard very strange stories. On approaching the Stones they saw tall blue flames suddenly emerge from them, and leap around the Stones in an eerie circle. The tourists were so scared that they

[1] A huge ball of twisted rope used in Orkney for thatching.

beat a hasty retreat to their ship and did not feel quite safe until Stennis Island was a mere speck in the distance.

There is also a story about an Orkney man who went to sleep one afternoon with his back against one of the Stones. He dreamed that bare bony arms suddenly clutched hold of him, and a hoarse voice said: "Malcolm Mackie, you belong to us. Here you must stay."

Malcolm thought that he begged very earnestly to be allowed to go home, and that the voice said, "Promise to return here this day week, and we will permit you to depart."

Malcolm promised, and immediately awoke. On returning to his home he told his wife about his dream and she said: "There is only one thing that will prevent you from keeping your promise. Rest easy, Malcolm Mackie; I will see that one thing is done."

She borrowed iron of all shapes and sizes from her friends and neighbours, and when the week had elapsed she made Malcolm lie in bed and surrounded him with the iron which she had collected. Whenever he felt impelled to keep his promise, she got more iron and kept on doing this till the seventh day had passed, and he was free. But he never again went anywhere near the Standing Stones of Stennis Island.

THE MOANING CAVE

THE following account of the haunting of the Moaning Cave in Argyle is based on a traditional ghost story of that county in *The Ladies' Cabinet.*[1]

Mr. George M'Readie set out on horseback one day from his home in Inverary for Glen Shiel, where his uncle and Miss Flora M'Alister, to whom he was engaged to be married, both lived. It was a long and intricate journey in those days, necessitating putting up for the night at inns on the way.

He had got within about twenty miles of his destination when he met one of his friends, who told him that there was a shorter route to Glen Shiel than the one which he was proposing to pursue, but that he would not advise him to take it as it would lead him past a cavern called the Moaning Cave, on account of certain strange sounds issuing nightly from it, that were no doubt explainable on quite natural grounds but which the people in the

[1] 1836.

locality attributed to evil spirits. "In such dread is the Moaning Cave held," his friend added, "that no one will ever go near it alone after nightfall."

M'Readie decided to go by the longer route. He parted with his friend at a spot where several roads met and rode on alone. He kept thinking of a dream which he had had recently. It was this: He fancied that he was on a wide stretch of waste land strewn with great fantastically shaped rocks that were all gazing fixedly at him with heavily lidded eyes; their black grotesque shadows stood out with uncanny clearness on the moonlit soil. There were no trees, no shrubs, no vegetation of any kind, only rocks. Facing him was the yawning mouth of a cave, and in the middle of it was a great black rock bearing a strange and startling resemblance to a face, all the features of which were clearly defined.

The strangeness of the face was indescribable. It did not belong to this world, but to a world inhabited by spirits possessing powers and qualities beyond the ken of human beings. A feeling of the utmost awe stole over M'Readie as he looked at the face. It terrified yet fascinated him, and while he stood staring at it, too spellbound to move, he heard ghastly moaning, which seemed to come from the cave, and eerie whispering voices, some of them bidding him to go at once and others telling him to stay. He awoke with the sounds lingering in his ears.

His mind was so engrossed in recollecting his dream that he did not heed the course he was pursuing, until the stumbling of his horse in a small hollow broke the chain of his thoughts. He glanced around him and realized that he had gone astray and deviated into a sort of wild pastureland. There was no sign of any highroad, only the rough, stony track along which he had been travelling apparently for some time.

He felt impelled to press forward. The further he advanced, the wilder and more desolate grew the scenery. There were no longer any trees, only gaunt, naked rocks that cast queer, dark shadows on to the bare ground. They reminded him very unpleasantly of the fantastically shaped rocks which he had seen in his dream. Presently he descried what he was now expecting to see, the yawning mouth of a cave. His horse came to an abrupt halt, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that he could induce it to proceed.

As he drew nearer to the cave he heard, coming seemingly from it, the same fitful, unearthly moaning that he had heard in his sleep, and at the entrance of the cave, in the exact position

which it had occupied in his dream, was the rock with the indescribably strange, dread-inspiring face. The brilliant moonlight threw every feature into startling relief. There was nothing to indicate its sex, but if it had any sex he felt that the sex was feminine rather than masculine.

It had the same extraordinary, irresistible attraction for him that it had had in his dream, and he was urging his frightened horse to draw nearer to it when a voice from somewhere behind him called out, "Come away from there!" He turned round and saw a man on a white horse. "Don't go any nearer to that cave," the man said. "It's the Moaning Cave."

The powerful magnetic influence of the rock abruptly ceased; its face no longer fascinated; it was just a rocky semblance, a crude caricature of a face. He drew away from it sharply and joined the horseman, who told him about the evil spirits that were believed to haunt the cave, and showed him the road to Glen Shiel.

He arrived safely at his uncle's house. The date of his marriage to Flora M'Alister was fixed. A week prior to it he dreamed again about the Moaning Cave. The second dream was even more vivid than the first dream. In it he found himself once again in front of the great black rock, which stood in the yawning mouth of the Moaning Cave. The peculiar beauty of the face fascinated and enchanted him to an even greater extent than it had done before, and he was gazing adoringly at it when he saw something in its eyes that terrified him. He tried to run but found, to his dismay, that he was rooted to the ground. "Promise that you will return here in seven days," a voice said, "and you will be allowed to depart." Frantic to escape he promised, whereupon the bonds that had held him limb-tied slackened, and he awoke.

The clock on the landing outside his room struck two.

Exactly a week later, a few minutes before two o'clock in the morning, he was seen galloping madly towards the Moaning Cave. Later in the day members of the wedding-party, who were anxiously searching for the absent bridegroom, found his dead body lying on the ground in front of the great black rock. He had kept his promise.

THE BLACK CAVE OF DEATH

MANY legends and traditional stories of ghostly phenomena are still current among the inhabitants of the Hebrides. Eig is wild and romantic without being perhaps what is generally considered extremely picturesque. The cataract and the mountain stream harmonize well with the crude and rugged scenery. The occasional scream of an eagle accords with a place where everything around is wildly magnificent.

Adjoining Eig is a smaller island, which contains the Black Cave of the M'Donalds. The entrance to it is very narrow, but the interior is capacious, and according to the popular belief prevalent in the Western island is periodically very badly haunted. Terrible cries of agony are heard and gruesome lights and fearful forms are seen by anyone who is bold enough to enter the cave alone during the night. The following legend is supposed to furnish an explanation for the haunting:[1]

When a clan of the M'Donalds possessed Eig, the little island close beside it served as a kind of out-farm where the cattle were pastured during the summer months, and it was the duty of the fair daughters of the M'Donalds to proceed thither for the purpose of milking the kine. One evening a joyous party had concluded this work and were amusing themselves on the greensward with harmless but boisterous mirth, when the sound of a pibroch was heard at some distance. The shouts of laughter ceased, and the girls listened attentively.

"It is the young chieftain," said Mary, "who has come in old Allan's boat to take us home," and her eyes, bright and blue, glistened with animation as she spoke; for Mary, the fairest of Eig's charming daughters, was beloved by the young M'Donald.

Her gay companions were of the same opinion, and snatching up their milk pails, they hastened towards the shore. They had not advanced far when the music sounded nearer to them, and as they turned the angle of a projecting rock their astonished eyes encountered not the well-known plaid of the M'Donalds but the dark tartan of the M'Leods. With wild screams they dashed their vessels on the ground and fled, but though terror lent them a momentary energy, their speed was unavailing; a dozen Highlanders

[1] *The Pocket Magazine*, Vol. I, 1829.

quickly overtook them, and their chief held the frightened Mary in his arms.

"Unhand me, dark chief of the M'Leods," she cried. "You and the M'Donalds seldom meet but on the brown moor foot to foot, and your hands seldom grasp each other save in the grasp of death. You once met on the broad heaths of Mornish."

"That is true," M'Leod said. "We met as you say, but your chieftain was surrounded by hundreds of his followers, and did I not hear you shrieking when their dirks drew my blood in torrents? I bore you to the green-sward where, faint with the loss of blood and reeling with the deep, dark gashes on my brow, I sank to the ground, and when my dizzy senses awoke you were gone. The sea danced brightly on the prows that bore you off, and I lay cold and stiffened in my gore. But now, girl, you are mine; your chieftain is not here, and were he here, he should not tear you from me."

In the meantime the M'Donalds were congregated round the wassail bowl. Each one of them grew more clamorous as the liquor circulated, and they were planning a predatory expedition to the mainland, when Allan, the aged boatman, rushed into the building, exclaiming, "Death to the M'Leods!"

"Death to the M'Leods!" the clansmen shouted, starting to their feet, while every man had his hand on his claymore.

"Death to the M'Leods!" Allan exclaimed again. "They have seized the daughters of Eig."

"Not Mary?" the young chief of the M'Donalds ejaculated. "Speak, Allan. Has Mary fallen into their hands?"

Allan nodded. "Going, as I was wont, to the island to bring home the maidens, I heard cries of distress and espied the dark tartan of the M'Leods."

"That's enough," the chief exclaimed. "Say no more."

In a few minutes the strait between the two islands was covered with the boats of the M'Donalds. It was not yet evening, and the M'Leods were still on the little island. When they saw their hereditary enemies approaching, their minstrel started to sing their war song, and a fierce encounter soon commenced. The M'Donalds triumphed, and the chief of the M'Leods was among the slain.

On the return of the victorious M'Donalds to Eig with the girls they had rescued, there was great rejoicing, which was interrupted by the advent of a fleet of M'Leods, who were thirsting for revenge. The M'Donalds fought gallantly against overwhelming numbers, but were forced to retire to the little island near Eig.

There they sought refuge in the Black Cave, where they were besieged by the exulting M'Leods, who declared that they would all be killed unless they surrendered their young chief.

"Let my blood appease their wrath," the chief of the M'Donalds said. "Think of your wives and children."

But his clansmen cried, "No, we all die together."

The M'Leods lit a huge fire at the mouth of the cave. The M'Donalds attempted to rush out of the cave, but the entrance was too small to give egress to more than one at a time, and those who had the temerity to venture out were quickly dispatched by the claymores of the M'Leods. The smoke from the huge fire, blown by the wind, penetrated to the innermost recesses of the cave. There was no escape from it. The suffocating M'Donalds grew desperate. Their cries of anguish were dreadful. The M'Leods mocked them and heaped additional fuel on the fire. Gradually the cries and groans grew fainter and fainter, and finally ceased. Every M'Donald within the cave was dead.

And ever since that time the cave has been haunted by their ghosts and the ghosts of the cruel M'Leods.

HAUNTED HILLS, MOORS AND VALLEYS

HILL AND MOOR GHOSTS

ROBERT HUNT in his *Popular Romances of the West of England*[1] writes about the Gump in Cornwall, which he says has long been the playground of the little people, some of whom were cruel.

An old St. Just man, who had been told that there was treasure on the Gump, resolved to get some of it. He stole towards the place one night when there was a harvest moon, and was joined by a dark shadow, which moved along by his side on the moonlit road. When he drew near to the Gump he heard ravishing music, slow and solemn, and quick and gay. It moved him from tears to laughter, and in spite of his age he could not refrain from dancing to it. It surrounded him and seemed to come from beneath the surface of the ground.

Eventually there was a startling crash, and the hill opened before him. An amazing sight met his astonished and dazzled eyes. He saw everywhere variously coloured lights. Every blade of grass was hung with lamps, every bush was illuminated.

An army of musicians emerged from the opening in the hills, followed by a troop of soldiers with an immense banner. At their heels came hundreds of spriggans, who crowded round the old man. Next came a crowd of little creatures. Some of them were laden with vessels of silver and gold, and goblets covered with precious stones; others brought the most delicious food and wine, which they placed on golden tables. When they had finished preparing a splendid banquet, out of the hill trooped very many lovely ladies, arrayed in glittering, costly robes, accompanied by an equal number of richly apparelled men. The music appeared to give new life to all the old man's senses. His sight became clearer, his hearing better, and his sense of smell much keener. The fragrance of flowers filled the air.

When all the lovely ladies and their escorts were seated, a signal was given by the most magnificently attired of all the males, who wore a crown, and was addressed as Prince, and the feasting commenced.

The old St. Just man, who was watching the scene with covetous eyes, stealthily approached the Prince and the Princess, whose

[1] Chatto & Windus.

jewels were the most brilliant of any of the ladies present. The old man's mouth watered as he looked at them.

He came nearer and nearer to the royal couple, and was about to clap his large old hat over them, they were both tiny, when there was a shrill whistle. The music at once ceased, the banqueters and banquet vanished, the lights were extinguished, and everywhere was dark. The old man tried to move, but he was on his back, bound hand and foot. He tried to shout, but he was tongue-tied.

Nasty crawling creatures ran over him, and the thongs that held him caused him the greatest agony. He lay in this state until the day had dawned, when the thongs loosened. He shook himself, and was free. He rose, wet, cold, hungry and no little ashamed. Sulkily and slowly, for he was very stiff, he made his way home. He never ventured to the Gump again, even in the daylight.

A vicar named Jago, of Wendron in Cornwall, was believed by his parishioners to have intercourse with the Devil. They were all afraid of him, and declared that he had second sight, and could cast spells on anyone who offended him. He could detect a thief and liar by merely looking at them.

People used to see him at crossroads and lonely spots at night, conversing with the evil spirits that haunted those places. The very horse on which he rode, a huge black animal, was said to possess supernatural powers and to be able to appear and disappear in the most unaccountable and alarming manner.

Dartmoor has its mischievous pixies, who lead people astray and steal things from houses. Probably the best known of all the Dartmoor ghosts is the phantom black hound, which some people still believe to be the spirit of Lady Howard, earthbound on account of her many bad deeds. The hound haunts the road between Tavistock and Okehampton, and brings misfortune to whoever sees it.

There have been at various times rumours of phantom houses, phantom horses and phantom dogs on Dartmoor, in addition to the black hound.

Exmoor also has its ghosts. A road between Exford and Porlock has such a sinister reputation that few people care to walk along it alone at night. The ghost of a man, who murdered his child, haunts one part of Exmoor, and terrifies all who encounter it to such a degree that they are ill for a long time afterwards. The ghost of a farmer, who drowned himself in Pinkworth Pond, is said to

haunt the neighbourhood of the pond and entail bad luck on all who encounter it. Westcote in his *View of Devonshire* says a barrow near Challacombe is haunted, and that anyone interfering with the barrow has always met with serious misfortune.

There was formerly a similar superstition in connection with barrows, which were called the graves of the giants, in Somerset. It was thought wicked to disturb them, and that anyone doing so would fall ill and probably die.

The same belief prevailed in the south-west of Ireland. At Castlehaven, near Bandon in County Cork, there are seven large menhirs, none of which can be removed without incurring the death of the person making the attempt. A labourer, who was ordered to remove one of the stones, was crushed to death by it. It was forthwith restored to its original position.

About one mile from Bruton there is a hill called Creek, which is one of the highest hills in Somerset. The view from its summit is very extensive. People who have been there have asserted that they have been able to see vessels in the Bristol Channel at a distance of thirty miles.

The base of Creek Hill is surrounded by a spacious area of several acres, which not so very long ago was inhabited by hares and even badgers.[1] Many stories have been circulated from time to time about very alarming and harmful supernatural phenomena on the hill and in the land adjoining it.

About the year 1849 colour was given to these rumours by the discovery of two human skeletons, laid transversely towards each other. They were unearthed by labourers, who were engaged in excavating stone in a quarry at the foot of Creek Hill. On being disturbed the skeletons crumbled into dust at once. It was conjectured that the place where they were found was the scene of a battle between the men of Somerset and the Normans, and that the two skeletons were those of men who had fallen in the conflict. Be that as it may, the haunting is said to have continued after the discovery of the bones.

A workman passing by the hill on his way home one night was nearly scared to death by a tall figure that rushed past him, and seemed to dive into the earth after it had gone a few yards. On another occasion a farmer, who was passing by the hill at night, saw someone lying on the ground. Wondering if the person was ill or had met with an accident, the farmer approached the

[1] *Farley's Bristol Journal*, February 16, 1850.

recumbent figure, and was about to speak to it, when it suddenly vanished. The next moment he heard loud peals of mocking, diabolical laughter, and was so terrified that he took to his heels, and never ceased running until he arrived at his farm. All the way there he heard footsteps bounding along after him. When he was in the farmyard he looked behind him and saw a tall, shadowy form bounding away in the direction of Creek Hill.

THE EILDON HILLS

THERE is something about the Eildon Hills that is strangely individual, something not easy to define, and which is not to be found elsewhere in Great Britain.

As one stands gazing over the counties of Roxburgh and Selkirk, with a faint tang of the not very far distant North Sea in the bracing air, one is affected by more than mere panorama. Look towards ancient Melrose, with its ruined abbey and tomb of Scotland's mightiest magician, Michael Scott; towards legend-impregnated Jedburgh, whose castle furnished Edgar Allan Poe with the theme of the Masque of the Red Death; and towards the far-famed haunted Ford of Longformacus; wherever your eyes wander there is scarcely a district that does not figure in ghost- or fairy-lore.

The Eildons have ever been the haunts of ghosts and fairies, and if one is what is termed psychic and sensitive, one can sense the near proximity of the supernatural on and around each of the three hills. The supernatural of the Eildons is peculiar to the Eildons. It thrills and fascinates, and sometimes terrifies. It savours of enchantment, of the spells and magic of Fairyland, in such a measure that one would hardly be surprised were there to appear, in all her radiant beauty, the Elfin Queen, arrayed like a goddess of the woods, as Scott describes her, or a troupe of grotesque gnomes or lovely oreads. Possibly it was consciousness of this near proximity of the Fairy World, which he loved so much, that was mainly responsible for the magnetic attraction that the Eildon Hills would seem to have had for Sir Walter Scott, and for the inspiration which led him to compose some of his most beautiful works.

According to a well-known legend, the loftiest of the three Eildon Hills contains a cavern, in which Scotland's most renowned

predictor and seer, Thomas of Learmouth, alias Thomas of Ercildoune, alias Thomas the Rhymer, and alias Son of the Dead Woman, was held in captivity, probably not unwillingly, by the beautiful Queen of the Mountain Fairies.

The spot where he first met her is said to be still marked by a stone.

The predictions of Thomas are quoted in the works of Barbour, Wyntoun and several other authors. In addition to predicting and composing verses, Thomas was credited with performing many miracles, not the least of which was that of restoring the dead to life.

In his *Demonology and Witchcraft* Sir Walter Scott tells the story of the horse trader who sold a fine black horse to an old and venerable man, whom he encountered one day on one of the Eildon Hills. The old man promised to pay for the horse, if the trader met him at midnight at a spot on the hill which was known as the Lucken-Hare. The trader went to the spot at the appointed hour and found the old man waiting there for him. The old man paid him in ancient coinage, and conducted him into a cavern containing long rows of stalls, in each of which was a fully caparisoned steed. At the feet of every horse lay an armed, sleeping warrior, who, the aged man declared, would awaken at the winding of the horn, when Scotland stood in greatest need of help; that would be at the battle of Sheriffmuir.

Near the stalls lay a sword and horn, which the old man said held the means of breaking the spell. The trader, impelled by curiosity, took hold of the horn before the old man could stop him, and wound it. The warriors and their horses immediately awoke, and created such a disturbance that the trader dropped the horn.

A loud voice repeated certain words, whereupon a blast of cold wind swept the terrified trader out of the cavern and bore him to the foot of the hill. He ran to his home as fast as his legs would carry him. When he had recovered from his fright he tried repeatedly to locate the cavern, but his efforts were in vain. Neither he nor anyone else has ever found that cavern. The aged man in the legend is supposed to have been Thomas of Ercildoune, who is said to be sleeping in the cavern along with the warriors and their horses.

According to Veitch, King Arthur and his knights also lie asleep in a cave somewhere in the Eildon Hills.

Whereas Thomas was seemingly guilty of nothing more harmful

than predicting very unpleasant things, the same cannot be said of the great Scottish wizard, Michael Scott. He was supposed to have resorted to the Eildons in order to contact the Devil and his demons, and to be tutored by them in the Black Art. He is credited with being such a quick and studious learner that he soon became a highly skilful black magician, and set up a school of wizardry in the Eildons. Among his most apt and notorious pupils was the bad Lord Soulis of Hermitage Castle, who was boiled alive at the Nine-stane Rig in Liddlesdale.

The Eildon Hills no doubt owe much of their glamour and romantic interest to Michael Scott and Thomas of Ercildoune, but without them there would still be more than a measure of unusual attraction in the three hills.

The strange beauty of the surrounding scenery, its many historic relics, the wonderful invigorating air, and the sense and consciousness of unreality would still all be there.

THE PENTLANDS AND HAUNTED CHURCHES

THE Pentlands are among the hills in Scotland where ghosts were said to glide about at night, witches to hold their covens, and fairies to ride on the whirlwind and dance in the moonlight. The belief in some of these things is still extant in the fastnesses of mountain glens and other remote, secluded places in the Scottish Highlands and Border lands.

One of the strangest of these beliefs, and which I am told still lingers, is in the Scottish succubus, an evil spirit in the form of a lovely woman who leads men astray. William Barton, a loose-lived man of notoriously strong passions, was one of her victims.

He was arrested on suspicion of being a warlock and put in prison. Under torture he said that a beautiful succubus had beguiled him, and that he had given her his soul in exchange for fifteen pounds of Scottish gold. She had baptized him under the name of John Baptist and kept him well supplied with money.

When he was told that a stake had been prepared for his execution, he laughed and said he did not care how many stakes were got ready to roast him, because he would not die as there would be no execution. Shortly afterwards the executioner, on arrival at the prison, fell dead as he crossed the threshold. What

greater proof could there have been of William Barton's evil power!

The magistrates who had tried him offered a reward to Mrs. Martin, the executioner's widow, if she would undertake her husband's office, and strangle Barton before he was burnt. She agreed to do this with great alacrity, clapping her hands gleefully and saying, "Dool for this parting my dear burd Andrew Martin."

Barton's wife was imprisoned with him. At first she denied that she was a witch, but a hint of tortures, even more agonizing than the thumbscrew, made her admit that malice against one of her neighbours had driven her to give herself up to the Devil, who had baptized her by the name of Margaratus. She said that she used to go to covens on the Pentland Hills and dance the carole there, while the Devil played on his pipes, and in the interims of the music made violent love to her.

That was considered to be more than enough to justify her death. She and her husband were executed together. Mrs. Martin strangled them both, and proved to be a very efficient and energetic executioner.

No stories of Scottish witches would seem to be complete without a reference to Robert Burns and the Auld Kirk at Alloway, where the Devil, in the shape of a beast, played the pipes in the corner; and where the coffins stood like open presses, each corpse holding a light in its cold, unearthly hand; and whence there issued the furious *Cutty Sark* and all her diabolical crew, intent on harming the too-venturesome Tam O'Shanter.

Just beyond the kirk are two bridges over the River Doon. It was towards the very old one that Tam spurred and switched with all his might, well knowing that ghosts and witches dare not cross a running stream. When he reached the middle of the arch one of the hags sprang forward to seize him, but nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which gave way to her grasp as if touched by lightning.

In a Galloway version of the tradition, Mr. Cunningham says:

> "It is recorded that the witch seizing the horse by the tail, stopped it in full career in the centre of the bridge, upon which the farmer struck a back-handed blow with his sword, that set him free and enabled him to pass the stream without further molestation. On reaching his own house, he found to his horror

> a woman's hand hanging on the horse's tail; and next morning he was informed that the handsome wife of one of his neighbours was dangerously ill and not expected to live.
>
> "He went to see her; she turned away her face from him, and absolutely refused to say what ailed her, upon which he forcibly bared her wounded arm and, displaying the bloody hand, accused her of witchcraft and dealings with the devil. Thereupon, it is added, she made a confession and, according to the laws of the time, was condemned and burnt as a witch."[1]

In a speech delivered at Cincinnati in the United States of America, on one anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, the speaker said that there was no other Scot whose name was so widely known as that of the bard of Ayrshire, and no other Scot whose memory was so affectionately cherished by his countrymen as that of the noble ploughman, the inspired poet, the gentleman of Nature's own making.

Another reputed haunted church in Scotland is the Auld Kirk of Tullich, long in ruins. It is associated with the following ghostly traditional happening:[2]

> "Early in the eighteenth century, upon a very stormy Sunday, the people of the village of Tullich gathered together at the church, as their manner was, in good time; but the minister in his somewhat distant manse, thinking that no one would come out on such a day, resolved to stay at home. The waiting people began to be very cold and proceeded to slap their hands and stamp their feet, in order to get some heat. By and by they thought that they would be better for some refreshments, and ale was procured. Soon the ale began to do its work, and what with its influence and the foot-stamping and hand-clapping they bethought themselves that they might have a dance; and ere the day was done the church was a wild scene of revelry and unholy mirth."

The story goes on to tell how in twelve months everyone who took part in the dance was dead, and that always on the anniversary of the dance their ghosts danced in the Auld Kirk of Tullich, clapping their bony hands, stamping fleshless feet, and

[1] *Life of Robert Burns*, p. 248.
[2] *Picturesque Scotland*, p. 402.

shrieking with laughter, to the terror of all who heard them. The dance became known as the Reel of Tullich and was performed for many years. Maybe it still is danced.

The old church of Beauly was long said to be haunted. People who passed by it at night testified to seeing gruesome lights within its ancient walls and to hearing unearthly moans and groans and diabolical laughter. Some of the people who summed up the courage to watch in the churchyard at night were found there in the morning, stretched on the ground, dead.

One very brave man who stayed one night in the church saw a shrouded figure which struck at him. He dodged aside, and it hit the wall with its fleshless fingers. He opened the church door, just as it was coming at him for the second time, and fled home. For many years afterwards the imprint of a hand on the wall of the church, said to be that of the ghost, was shown to visitors to the church.

In the Cathedral of Iona there is, or was some years ago, a small nook called the tailor's hole, in which a tailor was kept to make clothes for the monks.[1] He was so badly scared and tormented by apparitions that he died. One of the most terrifying of the ghosts was a fleshless hand, a great, grey paw with fingers, that used to pat his face and buffet him.

A fisherman who stayed one night in another church in one of the Western Isles fell asleep and was roused by a violent shaking. He sat up and saw a tall figure, surrounded by a gruesome blue light, standing in the pulpit staring down at him. It was dressed like a monk, and its face was that of a skeleton. It pronounced the names of seven people whom he knew and then vanished. He was so terrified that he lost no time in getting out of the church and running away from it. Within a few days all the people whose names the ghost had pronounced were dead.

HAUNTED BRIDGES

ONE of the worst haunted bridges in Great Britain is the Pont-y-Glyn between Corwen and Cerrif-y-Drudion in Wales. Situated in a picturesque glen, it spans a lovely mountain stream. In olden days the glen was the headquarters of a band of atrocious robbers,

[1] *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, by J. G. Campbell.

pure and reaches a place where the glen narrows and becomes precipitous. The river then glides smoothly on until it plunges from a great height into a circular pool, believed to be fathomless. The pool and a bridge in near proximity to it were for many years believed to be haunted by evil spirits[1] of the most frightful shapes, which delighted in terrifying people and urging them to commit suicide and murder.

Near the little town of Nenagh there is a bridge over a shallow stream that sometimes becomes dry in the summer. The bridge and the stream are reputed to be haunted. One day, about the middle of the last century, a farmer was returning home from the fair at Nenagh in an unusually gay mood, for he had met several of his cronies at the fair and had had a jovial time with them. As he approached the bridge he saw a white object, no bigger than his hat, gliding along the road by his side. When he reached the bridge his horse stopped short. He dismounted and tried to lead the horse over the bridge, but it recoiled, snorted and trembled violently. It was a bright moonlight night, and the farmer, chafed by the horse's obstinacy, and seeing nothing to account for it, lost his patience with the poor animal, and plied his whip and spur in earnest, using very bad language.

All of a sudden the horse shot forward, and the farmer saw very clearly, standing on the bridge, the tall, shadowy form of a woman in black. As he passed her she struck him on the shoulder. The blow threw him forward upon the neck of his horse, which in wild terror reached the door of his house at a mad gallop, and stood there quivering and steaming all over. He was very faint and ill, and got into the house with great difficulty. He begged his son to summon a priest at once.

When his wife and daughter were getting him to bed they saw distinctly the marks of five fingers on the flesh of his shoulder where the spectre had struck him. Those marks, which resembled in tint the hue of a body struck by lightning, remained imprinted on his flesh and were buried with him.

From the moment he returned home that night he was a scared, silent, broken-spirited man. It was early summer then. He died before the close of the year. This is a well-known story. I heard it when I was a boy, and reference is made to it in *All the Year Round*.[2]

The Auld Brig o'Doon is not the only haunted bridge in Scot-

[1] The *Illustrated London News*, June 29, 1861.
[2] 1870.

land. For many years after the great Tay Bridge catastrophe there were rumours of ghostly phenomena in the place where it happened. The disaster occurred during the night of December 28, 1879, when there was the worst hurricane ever known in Scotland. It struck the bridge furiously and swept away about four hundred and twenty yards of it, shortly before the train from Edinburgh to Dundee, with seventy passengers, reached the bridge. There was no warning of the damage done to the bridge. The train raced on to the bridge at great speed, and on reaching the fatal gap, plunged down into the raging river. Not a soul was saved.

I was a very little boy at the time, but I well recollect hearing about the disaster very soon after it happened.

According to rumour a ghostly re-enaction of the appalling catastrophe took place for many years. It was always on the anniversary of the tragedy. The following is a description of it by an alleged eye-witness:

One dark, bitterly cold December night in the eighties of the last century the narrator, at the time of the occurrence a young business man, was waiting with a friend in a sheltered spot close to the scene of the disaster, to see if the reports about the haunting were really true. About the hour when the catastrophe occurred they heard the dull murmur of an approaching train. The murmur speedily grew into the hoarse roar of an express train. As the train drew nearer the roar became louder and louder. The whistle sounded shrill and piercing. There was a flash of lurid light, a still louder roar as the phantom train sped past the two awe-stricken spectators on to the phantom bridge. A few moments later there were the most appalling screams, succeeded by a silence, broken only by the fitful murmuring of the wind and the increasing monotone of the electric wires. The narrator and his friend, who were very badly frightened, hastened home and did not recover from the scare they had experienced for many days.

After the tragic ending of the beautiful and promising young actress Peg Entwhistle, the Arroyo Seco bridge over a canyon near Hollywood was rumoured to be haunted by an evil spirit that urged people to commit suicide. Over sixty people have leaped from the bridge to their terrible death, and the majority of them have been unsuccessful Hollywood actresses.

Lastly, there is the Al Ponte Alla Carraia in Florence, which is haunted by a phantom black goat, believed to be the spirit of a

man named Marocchio, who led a very evil life and on account of his many sins was condemned to haunt the bridge until Doomsday. Those who see the goat invariably experience grave misfortunes and are sometimes prompted to kill themselves or kill other people.

THE BROCKLEY COMBE GHOSTS

BROCKLEY COMBE, a romantic, wooded glen in Somersetshire, is one of the numerous beauty spots within a few miles of Bristol, and is easily accessible by road from that city. The loftiness of the trees with their gnarled trunks and fantastically shaped branches, the richness of the shrubs and varied hue of the lofty rocks flanking either side of the glen, render it a favourite resort of lovers of nature and picnickers. A winding uphill road runs through the Combe.

In the daytime, when the glen is aglow with sunshine and echoing with the merry voices of adults and children, the idea of its harbouring anything so terrifying as ghosts seems incredible, but in the dead of night, when the Combe is darkened by the shadows of the great rocks and tall trees, and there is a sepulchral silence, broken only by the occasional hooting and wailing of night birds, the place assumes a different character, and anyone who is at all imaginative or psychic can well believe that it is haunted.

The Combe has long borne a reputation for being visited at times by evil denizens of another world. There are many stories relative to the haunting. One story is as follows:

Some gypsies spending one early autumn night in the glen were startled by the sound of a heavy vehicle coming along the road at a great rate. Several of the younger members of the tribe, urged by curiosity, peered through the foliage bordering the road. To their surprise they saw careering towards them a hearse-like coach drawn by four black horses. As the coach drew nearer their astonishment turned to terror when they perceived that the driver lacked a head. They did not wait for a closer inspection but fled.

Another story about the phantom coach relates to Mr. Benjamin Brown, of Birmingham. Brown, who was visiting friends near Brockley, ridiculed the notion of the Combe being haunted.

"Ghosts!" he scoffed. "There aren't such things, and if there were, it would take more than a score of them to scare Ben Brown."

Cigarette in mouth, his hat stuck jauntily on one side of his well-oiled head, he strolled casually one moonlight night to the

Combe. A church clock solemnly sounded midnight as he entered the glen. Not a soul was about. Not a sound was to be heard. The silence of the grave greeted his advent. His bravado diminished, but as yet only slightly, and he strolled on. Armed with a few stones, he crept behind a tree that overlooked the road.

Presently he heard the rumbling of heavy wheels and the pattering of hooves. He held a stone ready to throw at the coach. "I'm not afraid, not I," he muttered, but his teeth chattered. As the vehicle passed by him he hurled the stone with all his might. To his dismay it was not the phantom coach, but a wagonette containing a football team, returning from a late evening's jollification after a gallant victory. The stone narrowly missed the driver, who stopped the wagonette.

Brown ran for his life. The footballers with shouts of anger tore after him. Brown was no sprinter, and the footballers were overtaking him, when round a bend in the road came a sinister hearse-like vehicle drawn by four black horses. This time it *was* the phantom coach. The footballers fled in one direction, and Brown in another. When Brown arrived at the house of his friends all his breath was gone, and his scepticism regarding ghosts was gone too.

A third story relating to the phantom coach is about a cyclist. A young cyclist was riding a push-bicycle through Brockley Combe one autumn night when he encountered the much-dreaded phantom coach. It appeared so suddenly and came down the sloping road so quickly that before he could move aside out of its way it was on him. He was not conscious of contacting anything solid. A current of icy air seemed to pass right through his body, and he found himself stretched on the ground. It was some moments before he was able to rise and continue on his journey. He had received no physical injury, but his nerves were seriously affected. The Brockley Combe phantom coach has that effect on people; it shatters their nervous system.

Another phantom said to haunt the Combe is that of a parson of very evil repute.

Two gentlemen, a doctor and a clergyman, were driving through the glen one fine May night. Suddenly the horse became very restless and evinced signs of most unusual nervousness. It seemed to want to stop and then to turn. It quickened its pace and moved nearer to one side of the road. The doctor, wondering what was causing the horse to behave in such an odd manner, peered around and saw walking a little ahead of him, in the centre of the road, a

tall figure in a long black cloak, which reached nearly to the ground. The doctor, who was in sound health, stared at the figure and wondered if it was an optical illusion. There was something very peculiar and unreal about it. The clergyman, who heard him muttering to himself, enquired if he was addressing the phantom.

"Do you see what I have been seeing for the last few minutes?" the doctor said.

"Yes," the clergyman replied. "The figure of a man in a long black cloak. Speak cheerfully to the horse or it may stampede. It's getting very restless."

When they came to a wider part of the road, in the centre of which was a triangular patch of turf, bare and treeless, the figure disappeared. The doctor, who was almost out of breath from his attempts to pacify and restrain the horse, said he thought the figure had gone to the right of the patch of turf.

"It went neither to the right nor to the left," the clergyman said. "It faded right away and vanished. I was watching it intently. It was not of this world."

The horse, which had been so uneasy, was now quite calm and tractable. It took them to their destination without any mishap. It was never again, however, the same horse. It had always been docile and easy to manage, but after that night in the Combe it was very timid, nervous and restless.

According to Betsy Prodgen,[1] who was born in Brockley about the beginning of the last century, the ghost in the long black cloak is that of the Rev. John Herbetson, a reputed very wicked rector, who lived in the neighbourhood of Brockley Combe.

In the year 1776 Mr. James Stevens, a gentleman of independent means, who lived not far from Brockley Combe, was injured by a fall from a tree in the glen. Mr. Herbetson happened to witness the accident and, thinking that he saw a way to benefit by it, he provided means for removing Mr. Stevens to the latter's home at Chelvey.

Mr. Stevens was known to have amassed considerable wealth before he retired from business, and Mr. Herbetson determined to get some of his money. With that object in view Mr. Herbetson took into his confidence an old college friend, whom he knew to be as unscrupulous as he was himself. The two rogues paid daily visits to the bedside of Mr. Stevens, exhibiting the deepest concern at his injury. They completely deceived him and contrived through

[1] *Bristol Times and Mirror*, June, 1870.

their artifices to obtain his signature to a will, drawn up by themselves. They were his sole beneficiaries. Mr. Stevens died soon after signing the will.

Neither Mr. Herbetson nor his friend lived long to enjoy their ill-gotten wealth. Mr. Herbetson was said to be in league with the devil and to practise black magic in Brockley Combe in the dead of night. The night he died a tall, shadowy figure, neither human nor animal, but a terrifying mixture of both, was seen to enter the rectory. Shrieks were heard coming from within the house, and it was firmly believed that the Devil or one of his demons had come for the rector's sin-laden soul.

His ghost, clad in a long black cloak closely resembling the garment which he wore in his lifetime, was seen in Brockley Combe soon after his death, and it is rumoured to have appeared there within the last few years.

Yet another ghost haunts the Combe. It is that of an old woman who lived in a cottage near the Combe, and was murdered in or close to it about the year 1812. Her appearances are the forerunners of misfortune to those who witness them. Fortunately they are rare.

THE MYSTERIES OF SADDELL AND NEIDPATH GLEN

LEGENDS and traditionary tales cluster round the Castle and monastery of Saddell in Kintyre. The legend relating to the monastery, now in ruins, is as follows:

Somerled, the famous Thane of Argyll and Lord of Kintyre, murdered his stepfather and was haunted by his ghost.[1] He travelled to Rome and confessed his crime to the Pope, who told him that he would continue to be haunted until he built a Holy House between two hills and two waters.

Saddell being the only place that in his knowledge answered to this description, he went there, and founded a Cistercian Monastery. The ghost never tormented him again. He did not live to see the completion of the building. It was completed by his son, Reginald, who assumed the title of king. In the cemetery of the monastery are the graves of Archibald Campbell of Carradale, who was killed at the battle of Inverlochy, and some of the Macdonalds.

[1] *Chambers's Journal*, 1882.

The Macdonalds used to visit the O'Neills of Tyrone and the O'Donnells of Tirconnell, and on one occasion Righ Fiongal Macdonald returned from Ireland with the wife of one of the Irish chieftains. Her aggrieved husband followed her to Saddell, where he was seized by Macdonald and starved to death in a dungeon in Saddell Castle. Three of his friends came over from Ireland to seek redress from Macdonald, who received them with every show of friendliness and hospitality, and while they were sleeping cut off their heads.

The King of Scotland heard of this and ordered Macdonald to appear before him. Macdonald obeyed and was compelled to swear allegiance to the King. Directly he got back to Saddell Castle he defied the King with impunity, and nothing was done. After the crimes that he had perpetrated Saddell Castle was reputed to be haunted by the ghosts of his victims and after his death by his ghost.

The Saddell Monastery, which has long been in ruins, is haunted likewise by more than one grisly spectre.

A servant-maid of a farmer who lived in Glen Barr, seven miles from Saddell, fell in love with the son of her employer. To get rid of her the farmer told her that if she would cross the hills to Saddell Monastery on a dark, stormy night and bring back the skull from the tomb of the founder, he would permit her to marry his son. He never imagined that the girl would dare to venture on such an expedition.

To his intense surprise, however, she set off to Saddell on a night when there was a heavy snowstorm, and returned in the morning half dead with fatigue, but with the skull in her hand. She said that when she got to the monastery she found the door open. She groped her way to the founder's tomb and was terrified on hearing mysterious sounds all around her. She found the skull, and on her way back to the door was pursued by invisible forms. She got out of the building and closed the door behind her. As she did so there was a rushing sound and something crashed against it. She did not know how she ever got back to Glen Barr.

She had the skull and claimed the promised reward. The farmer doubted the veracity of her tale. He did not believe that the skull she showed him came from the monastery.

In order to make sure, however, he went to the monastery and sought the tomb of its founder. The skull, which always occupied a certain place on it, was no longer there. True to his word, the farmer permitted the brave maid to marry his son.

Sceptics regarding the supernatural suggested that the sounds heard by the maid might have been due to the deer, which lived in the grounds of the monastery and sought shelter in the building itself on wet and stormy nights. The monastery was well known, however, to harbour ghosts, so that the source of the sounds remained a mystery.

The anonymous author of *Ghostly Visitors* gives the following harrowing account of a haunting in a glen in the rear of Neidpath Castle ruins in Peebleshire:

A lady named Hay was found horribly murdered in the glen some generations ago, and her spirit is believed still to haunt the scene of the crime.

One evening, not very many years ago, an old woman was walking along the road, near to this spot, when she saw a head adorned with lappets, or what was formerly known as 'pearlin,' moving along the top of the wall on her left. This strange mode of progression was continued for some little time, when the head turned round and the eyes looked at her. Then appeared the body, which joined itself to the head, and both came over into the road and stood up opposite to her. So visible was the apparition that the woman distinctly saw a red line across the throat, at the sight of which she fainted.

This fearful vision was also seen by a man residing in the neighbourhood, and such was the effect it produced upon him that he was ill for a fortnight.

THE MOCKING GHOST OF WHITTINGDON COMMON

IN A letter addressed to the Editor of the *Brierlay Hill and Stourbridge Advertiser* in December, 1872, the writer relates his encounter with a very alarming and unusual species of ghostly phenomena.

He had been to a fair at Kinver, and was crossing Whittingdon Common late at night on his way home, when he saw a very tall, lanky figure coming towards him. It halted when a few feet from him and stood silent and motionless. He could not see its face.

He struck at it with his stick. His stick encountered nothing solid. It went right through the figure, which gave a low, chuckling laugh. He struck at it again, and the same thing happened. The stick passed through the figure, which again chuckled. He became

frightened. He tried to run away but he was limb-tied, glued to the ground. The figure never moved. It remained stationary in front of him chuckling until daybreak, when it raised its long, skinny arms over its head, and with a loud peal of derisive laughter vanished.

The spell, which had rendered the writer of the letter paralysed, was broken, and he continued on his way to his destination. He reached it thoroughly exhausted and did not recover from his weird experience for several days.

The letter is signed 'E.T.'

UNHOLY LOVE

EVIL LOVE

IN THE year 1820 there were living in the village of Ludgvan, near Penzance, a man named William Polgrain and his wife Sarah. They were an ill-matched couple, and frequently quarrelled. William, who was many years older than Sarah, was morose, irritable, miserly and absurdly jealous. He hated any kind of amusement and spent most of his time indoors sitting by the fire, counting his money and reading the Bible. Sarah, on the other hand, was very high-spirited and loved company.

At the annual village fair she met a handsome young horse-dealer, popularly known as Yorkshire Jack. They had drinks, and from that time onward were constantly seen together. Polgrain got to hear about it and forbade Sarah to see Jack. She declared that she would see him as often as she pleased, and when Polgrain struck her, she knocked him down, sat on him, scratched his face and beat him unmercifully. The next-door neighbours, hearing his cries, came to his rescue, and pulled the infuriated Sarah away from him, but not before she had punished him very severely.

After this Yorkshire Jack came to the house frequently, and whenever Polgrain remonstrated Yorkshire Jack held him, while Sarah horse-whipped him. She told John Rodgers, another of her lovers, that her husband was a jealous old fellow, and that if he continued to grumble when Yorkshire Jack came to see her, she would thrash him first and then settle him once and for all with two pennyworth of white sugar.

The following day she bought arsenic in Penzance, pretending that her home was overrun with mice. About a week afterwards Polgrain visited a surgeon in Penzance and complained of giddiness and pains in his stomach. The surgeon gave him medicine and came to see him. A few days later he died. The surgeon who attended him believed that his death was due to cholera and gave a certificate to that effect.

Soon after his funeral rumours of foul play began to be circulated, and became so insistent that the local authorities had his body exhumed. On examination enough arsenic to kill three people was found in it. Sarah Polgrain was arrested, tried, found guilty and sentenced to death.[1] The case against her was most damning;

[1] *Annual Register*, August, 1820, and contemporary Press.

it could scarcely have been more so had she been caught in the act of administering the poison.

In prison she exhibited no indications of repentance, but expressed an ardent desire to tear to pieces certain of the witnesses who had testified against her. She hoped that she would meet her husband in the next world, in order that she might give him another sound beating.

The execution was at Bodmin. At her request Yorkshire Jack was permitted to speak to her on the scaffold. Just before the death-cap was put on her head, and the fatal noose was adjusted, she looked earnestly at Jack, and in slow, measured tones said, "You will?" After a little hesitation Jack replied quickly and nervously, "I will." She kissed him. They then separated, and he joined the eagerly awaiting crowd. The executioner performed his grim task. The crowd cheered, and the black flag was hoisted on the flagstaff.

Jack was never the same man after the execution. He became taciturn and low-spirited. He told several of his friends that he had sworn, whether living or dead, to marry Sarah Polgrain, and that he was in constant dread of her coming to claim him.

At the advice of his friends he went to sea. It was of no avail. He was still in constant terror of seeing Sarah. His shipmates used to see him looking over his shoulder at something which they could not see. When they were lying in their hammocks they were aware of something very eerie and horrible close beside them. This state of things continued until they were once again off the Cornish coast, and a storm arose.

Yorkshire Jack was standing on the deck talking to one of his shipmates. Suddenly his face blanched and he pointed in terror at the sea. His shipmate looked in the direction he indicated and saw the tall, luminous figure of a woman in black gliding over the foam-crested waves. She drew momentarily nearer and nearer to the ship. All the crew were now on the deck. They stood gazing at the apparition, too appalled to say a word or utter a sound.

Yorkshire Jack gave a fearful cry. "It's Sarah!" he screamed. "She's coming for me. Drive her away. For mercy's sake keep her from me." He threw out his arms to ward her off, staggered, and fell heavily on the deck.

For some minutes none of the crew moved. They were far too frightened. When they summoned up the courage to examine Jack, they found that he was dead. Sarah Polgrain had claimed him.[1]

[1] *Popular Romances of the West of England,* by R. Hunt.

to keep to his bed. In his delirium he kept appealing to the spirit with the golden hair and blue eyes to come to him and love him.

Before he had quite recovered from his illness he rose from his bed one cold, misty night and stole quietly out of the house. He was found in the morning at the Fell, lying on the ground in front of the haunted boulder, dead, with a look of the most frightful horror on his face.

POSSESSION, OBSESSION AND POLTERGEISTS

POSSESSION

DURING a railway journey from New York to Buffalo, where I was dated to give a talk in the winter of 1934, I met the Rev. Peter Power, with whom I chatted. He had travelled much and had led an eventful life before he became a priest. One of the strangest stories that he told me was the following:

His kinsman, the Rev. Michael Power, was sitting alone one evening, about the middle of the last century, in the parlour of his little house in a remote district in the south-west of Ireland. He was very tired. He had visited many of his parishioners, some of whom had been more than usually tiresome.

He was deeply engrossed in a book, when there was a loud knock at the front door. A gruff voice asked if he was at home. He had forgotten to instruct Mrs. Murphy, his housekeeper, to tell anyone who called that he was out. Wondering who the caller could be, and hoping that it was not anyone whom he particularly did not want to see, he put his book aside, and was standing with his back to the grate when the door opened and a tall man in a dark suit stepped into the room.

"I am sorry to disturb you at this hour," the stranger said, "but the matter that has brought me here is very important. My name is Randle Beecham."[1]

Father Michael scanned the stranger closely and decided that there was something queer about him, an element of a disturbing and unusual nature. He was seemingly of middle age with dark hair streaked with grey, and strongly marked features. There was a look in the deep-set brown eyes that showed the mind was in a harassed, strained state. Father Michael bade him sit down and explain the purpose of his visit.

"I hardly know how to begin," Beecham said. "What I have to say is so very peculiar. You believe in obsession, don't you?"

"Why, yes," Father Michael replied. "I most certainly do believe in obsession and possession. Is it about obsession you want to talk?"

Beecham nodded. "Yes, but before I begin my story let me say a few words regarding my home and family. I'm a widower, with

[1] All names mentioned in this story are fictitious.

one child, Elise, a girl of seventeen, who will be leaving school at the end of next July. She is spending her Christmas holidays with me. Eighteen months ago I lost my wife. We had had a very happy married life and were devoted to one another. You can imagine how I suffered when she was taken from me. The blow was so overwhelming that for some long time I was quite unable to concentrate on anything. I missed her terribly. Had it not been for Elise and my work—I am an artist—I should have committed suicide."

Father Michael looked shocked.

"And jeopardized your chance of going to Heaven?"

"I did not think or care about that," Beecham said. "As time went on I gradually became more reconciled to my lonely life. Prior to my wife's illness I had been a fairly regular attendant at church, but after her death I ceased to go. My wife was so kind and gentle and wholly good that I could not imagine how God could allow her to suffer so much, or suffer at all. I lost all faith in God."

Father Michael sighed. "So many have," he exclaimed sympathetically. "And yet there must be some good reason for our having to suffer so much in this life. It may well be that those who suffer most will be compensated most. If we did not endure pain and sorrow in this world we could not experience real happiness in the life to come. How very boring everlasting happiness in this world would be."

"No more boring than everlasting happiness in Heaven, which is what the Scriptures tell us the good people in this world will experience. I much prefer boredom to suffering. I have had more than my share of suffering."

"Pain purges, my son," Father Michael piously remarked, "and there can be no Heaven if the soul is in any way tarnished. One mustn't question the justice of God. He knows what is necessary and best for man."

Beecham made no comment, but it was easy to see from his expression that he was not in agreement with Father Michael.

"Let me continue my story," he said after a brief silence. "Last May I went for a walking tour in Brittany with my friend Charles L'Estrange. One day we arrived at a village called Louville, and enquired of the landlord of the only inn the way to Rennes. We intended to spend the night there.

"He told us that there were two ways of getting to that place, one rather longer than the other, but strongly advised us to take

the longer. We asked him why, and after a little hesitation he said because the shorter way was through a wood, which bore a very sinister reputation.

"Knowing how superstitious the Bretons, especially the peasants, are, we asked him jokingly if the wood was haunted. But he wouldn't say yes or no. Inferring from his reticence that he believed the wood was haunted, we set off gaily, fully resolved, just for the fun of it, to take the shorter route.

"By the time we came to the wood it was getting dusk. The wood, which stretched far away on either side of us, looked sombre and forbidding with its dense foliage and dark, weird shadows. After deliberating for a while whether it would not be advisable to retrace our steps and go by the longer route after all, we finally entered the wood.

"The sepulchral stillness was every now and then broken by the flutter of a leaf, the creaking and crunching of undergrowth beneath the tread of some four-footed prowler of the night, the rustling of foliage by birds, scared at our approach, and the dismal hooting of an owl. The path was so full of ruts, and overgrown in places with brambles and rank vegetation, that we couldn't proceed fast for fear of stumbling.

"After feeling our way with difficulty for nearly an hour we were startled to see, a little distance ahead of us, a tall figure in gleaming white. We at once thought of the warning which the landlord of the inn had given us about the wood, and came to an abrupt halt. Ashamed at our cowardice we soon, however, pushed on, and were relieved and amused to find that what we had taken for a ghost was only a tree. Standing in the centre of a clearing, its white, bare trunk presented a singularly blasted appearance.

"We were both so tired with our long and arduous tramp that we decided to camp out in the clearing. The tree had a curious fascination for me, and I proposed sleeping under its widespreading branches, one of which resembled a long bony arm with a great hand poised, as if in the act of clutching hold of someone.

" 'You sleep under the tree if you like,' L'Estrange said, 'but I won't. To me there is something horribly evil about it.'

"I laughed at him and told him not to be so silly, but I couldn't make him change his mind, and it ended in my making my bed under the tree, while he lay out in the open.

"I shall never forget that night. I had a succession of horrible nightmares. No sooner did I awake in a cold sweat of terror from

one nightmare than I fell asleep, and had an even worse one. I was only too thankful when morning came.

"On rising from the ground I was distinctly conscious of a great change in me. I was not the same man. Thoughts that had hitherto been foreign to my nature surged through me. L'Estrange was shocked at my conversation, at the terms I used and the views I expressed. And he was by no means narrow-minded. He attributed the difference in me to the tree, and I have strong grounds for believing that he was right.

"From what we subsequently learned, Father, the tree bore a very evil reputation. More than one person had been found dead hanging from one of its branches, and several mysterious murders had taken place in close proximity to it.

"The change in me was not for that one night only, it was a durable change, entailing a process of general demoralization. I am afraid of myself, Father, fearful of the harm I may do to my daughter, whom I love so much. I don't fancy that I'm possessed. I know I am possessed, obsessed and possessed by the beastly spirit that was attached to that tree."

"I wonder!" Father Michael exclaimed. "You don't think it is just your imagination, do you? It seems so utterly fantastic."

Beecham shook his head. "I expected that you might say something like that, but I assure you that it is not my imagination. I am positively certain that an evil spirit has got hold of me, and I dread the consequences, unless you or someone else will rid me of it."

Beecham spoke with such heartfelt emotion, and there was such an appealing expression in his eyes, that Father Michael was greatly moved. The more he studied Beecham the more puzzled he became. He could not make up his mind if the man was mad.

After much deliberation he said, "If it will comfort you and ease your mind, I will try and rid you of the spirit which you believe is influencing you so much."

When he spoke about the exorcism taking place at his church, Beecham objected. He said that he was particularly anxious for the ceremony to be carried out in his own house. Father Michael protested, but in the end gave way, realizing the probability of Beecham having some peculiar reason for such a request.

"I must warn you, however," he added, "that there may be some danger in performing the act in a private dwelling-place."

"I am prepared to risk that," Beecham exclaimed. "I'm not afraid."

"The danger may not be so great for you," Father Michael said, "as for someone else. Do you remember in the eighth chapter of St. Matthew how the devils, when cast out of the two men by Our Lord, went into a herd of swine? Well, in cases of exorcism it is extremely important that no third person should be present during the ceremony. Will you promise that you will take every precaution to ensure our being quite alone in your house?"

Beecham promised. "There will only be myself in the house," he said. "I will arrange for my daughter and housekeeper to be out for the night."

They fixed a day and hour, and Beecham went away greatly relieved.

The night chosen for the occasion proved to be close and sultry. Ominous clouds hung low in the sky, and far-off rumblings were every now and then heard. True to his word Beecham was alone in the house, momentarily expecting the arrival of Father Michael. Elise was spending the evening with friends, and Mrs. Chandler, the housekeeper, had gone to her daughter-in-law's home in a neighbouring village.

The house in which Beecham lived was very suitable for the occasion. It stood alone on the fringe of the village, separated from the nearest house by a stream and a quarry. Facing it, on the far side of the road, was a spinney, consisting mostly of fir trees.

Beecham glanced impatiently at the clock. He hated unpunctuality. Father Michael was already five minutes late. Beecham was pacing up and down the floor in a state of extreme irritability when the garden gate clicked, footsteps came hurriedly up the path, and there was a knock on the front door. It was the priest, red in the face from hurrying on such a warm night, and much out of breath.

"I am sorry that I am late," he panted, "but I had a visitor who would stay talking."

A room in the rear of the house had been prepared for the ceremony. Elise and Mrs. Chandler were led to believe that it was merely for a church service.

Father Michael, endeavouring to overcome the feeling of fear that gripped him when he and Beecham were together in the room, the only human beings in the house, solemnly began the rites, which the Roman Catholic Church had ordained for the occasion.

Beecham, standing before him, was ghastly pale, the tightening of his lips and heaving of his breast evincing the intense emotional struggle that was taking place within him. From outside there came

at intervals the rumbling of distant thunder, and the whining and yelping of a dog.

As he proceeded Father Michael was conscious of a feeling of expectancy in the atmosphere of the room, of a tensing and sense of extraordinary concentration, suggestive of the near advent of some supernatural occurrence. An accompanying change was visible in Beecham. The muscles in his face twitched convulsively, the heavings of his breast grew more and more violent, his eyes gleamed, and his expression became so wholly evil and menacing that Father Michael recoiled in horror.

Striving to remain calm, he sprinkled Beecham with holy water, pronouncing as he did so sacramental words and adjuring the evil spirit, which he knew was possessing Beecham, in the name of the Holy Trinity to come out of the man and leave the house and grounds. As he uttered the words a shadowy form slowly emerged from Beecham. Father Michael could never have believed that even in Hell there was anything so appallingly foul and frightful.

Immeasurably shocked he watched it, as it passed swiftly and noiselessly across the floor and through the doorway, out into the garden, where it vanished. Beecham, who did not see it, sank pale and exhausted into a chair. Father Michael remained with him until he had recovered, and then went home.

Beecham left the neighbourhood a few weeks after the exorcism, and returned to Dublin, his native city. He married again, was very happy and ever grateful to Father Michael for having so successfully exorcized the evil spirit that had possessed him.

PERKES THE OBSESSED

ONE of the strangest cases of intercourse with dangerous evil spirits and obsession by them is related in a letter sent to the Bishop of Gloucester by the Rev. Arthur Bedford, who was Vicar of Temple Parish, Bristol, at the beginning of the 18th century.[1]

Mr. Bedford said that while he was curate to Dr. Read, Rector of St. Nicholas in the city of Bristol, he became acquainted with Thomas Perkes, a steady, studious young man, who lived with his father at Mangotsfield, Gloucestershire. Perkes told him that he had recently been studying Cornelia Agrippa's *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, in which there was a formula for raising spirits.

[1] The *Bristol Times and Mirror*, May 26, 1866.

He said that out of curiosity he went one night to the crossroads about one and a quarter miles from Frenchay, and in obedience to the instructions in the formula made a circle on the ground with consecrated chalk. When he had done this, he stood in the centre of the circle with a lighted lantern on one side of him and a lighted consecrated candle on the other side. He then repeated several incantations from the formula and invoked any spirits that might be present to manifest.

Nothing happened for some minutes, and then suddenly a number of tiny, pretty girls appeared and danced around the circle. He said that he was frightened until he remembered that no harm would befall him so long as he remained within the circle. In response to his question as to whether there was a Heaven and a Hell, one of the spirits said that both these places actually existed.

He asked her what Hell was like. She said that it was a very dreadful place, full of horrible spirits, and begged him never to refer to it again. She told him that the class of spirits to which she and her companions belonged had its headquarters in the air; that there was a supreme chief or ruler, who had a permanent court and counsellors; and that there were three Orders, each of which had specific functions. Spirits of the First Order were transmitters of messages to and from the spirits functioning on the earth. Spirits belonging to the Second Order were bearers of those messages to and from the earth. Spirits of the Third Order functioned on the earth, according to the directions that they received from the supreme chief.

Perkes said that at his request the little spirits sang to him from behind a bush. Their voices were curiously shrill and resembled the voices of old women. When they had finished singing they emerged from behind the bush, and after conversing for a short time with Perkes they abruptly vanished.

Mr. Bedford said he told Perkes that he thought he had done very wrong in invoking the spirits, as it was contrary to the teaching in the Bible. Perkes disagreed, and said the spirits that he had invoked were perfectly harmless, and that he intended going to the crossroads again to try and obtain a familiar spirit that would come when he wanted it and always do his bidding. He wanted Mr. Bedford and a Mr. Bailey to accompany him to the crossroads and witness his invocation, but they both declined.

Mr. Bedford did not see him again for several months, and when he next encountered him he looked ill and in great trouble. He told

Mr. Bedford that he had gone to the crossroads again one night, taking with him the various things that were mentioned in Agrippa's book for invoking a familiar spirit. After he had made a circle on the ground he invoked any spirit present to appear.

The minutes passed without anything happening, and he was thinking of going home, when a strange figure, of a vague, indefinite form, suddenly appeared and informed him that its name was Malachi, and that it was his familiar spirit. It bade Perkes enter its name on the first page of a little book that was among the things which Perkes had been instructed to bring with him. It also enjoined him to inscribe in the book the names of all the spirits that would appear that night and on subsequent occasions, and told him that whenever he wished it to come to him, he had only to open the book at the page on which its name was entered.

Soon after Malachi had given him these instructions other spirits appeared; some of them resembled savage beasts of prey, and others things that he had seen in nightmares. They hissed and made horrible grimaces at him, and had he not been well within the consecrated circle they would undoubtedly have attacked him. They kept moving round and round the circle until daybreak, when they all vanished.

Perkes said that he had never felt well after that night at the crossroads, and that he constantly had a feeling that evil spirits were close to him, although he could not see them, and had never made any compact with them. He expressed great repentance for having invoked spirits.

Mr. Bedford bade him pray earnestly for deliverance from satanic influences and advised him to see a doctor without delay. His advice, however, came too late. Perkes died within a few weeks. His death was believed to have been due to the fright he endured the night he invoked Malachi. He was only twenty-one years of age.

The book by means of which Perkes claimed he had invoked spirits passed into the possession of Mr. William Llewellin, who was present at his funeral. What subsequently became of the book is not recorded.

One day in June, 1760, Mr. Joseph Beck and a friend, who had heard extraordinary rumours about spirit-raising in the past by this man named Perkes, paid a visit to the crossroads where the invocations were alleged to have taken place. There they found an old man, a native of Frenchay, repairing a stone wall. The old man told

them that his name was Brimble, and that he remembered hearing about Perkes in his youth.

He said he knew several men who were able to do wonderful things through having invoked spirits at those particular crossroads. A man named Coal was one of them. He said he went one evening to a public house near Frenchay. Coal and several other men were in the taproom. Coal told them that if they would sit quite still and not move a limb, he would give them a convincing proof of his magical powers. They laughed and were sceptical, but promised to keep very quiet.

Coal then stood in a corner of the room with his back towards all the company. He took something out of one of his pockets, and immediately afterwards they saw by the light of the candles in the room a tree, about three feet in height, rise from the centre of the floor. Presently two little men in short coats and red caps appeared. They began to cut down the tree with great skill and celerity.

As soon as the tree had been felled, and the little men had gathered up the chips that were strewn about the floor, men, tree and chips vanished simultaneously. Brimble told Mr. Beck and his companion that he and everyone who had witnessed the extraordinary exhibition were convinced that it was supernatural, and that Coal was no trickster but a genuine magician.

Mr. Beck enquired if there had been any invocations at the crossroads recently. Brimble said that he was not aware there had been any within the last ten years. The crossroads, he added, were so horribly haunted by evil spirits that no one ventured to pass them alone after nightfall. He told them that he was going home very shortly, and advised them not to linger there after he had gone, as it would soon be getting dusk. They took his advice and went.

RIDERS FROM HELL

THE following account of a strange Fox Hunter is taken from *Letters by the late Lord Lyttelton*, Vol. I., p. 141, London, 1787.

The members of a well-known hunting club were engaged in a chase one day, when a stranger of singularly aristocratic appearance joined them. No one knew him, or had any idea whence he came; and, strange to say, no one enquired. He was well mounted and rode with a degree of courage and daring that astonished everyone. His horse was amazingly powerful; nothing stopped it. It left the

huntsmen far behind. He swore that it came from Hell and that its rider was the Devil.

When the chase was over, the members of the hunt club invited the stranger to dinner. He accepted the invitation and surprised his hosts as much by his eloquence, knowledge and manners as he had done by his horsemanship. He was an orator, poet, painter, musician, lawyer, and a divine; in short he was everything, and the magic of his conversation kept the hunters awake and enthralled long after their accustomary bed-hour. At length, however, wearied nature could be charmed no more, and the hunters began to steal away by degrees to their repose.

The stranger manifested great uneasiness when he observed the company diminish, and exerted himself to the utmost to maintain the interest of his depleted audience. He succeeded, but only for a short time.

Soon after everyone had retired to rest the household was alarmed by the most terrible shrieks. There was silence for a time, and then the shrieking was renewed, and was even more dreadful than previously. Horrible groans of despair succeeded the shrieks, and were followed by bloodcurdling yells of pain and terror. The listeners, hunters and domestics, were appalled. The more courageous of them went in a body to the stranger's room, from which the sounds proceeded, and knocked loudly at his door. He declared angrily that he had heard no noise and told them not to disturb him.

They had hardly returned to their respective rooms when there was a renewal of the yells, shrieks and groans, which seemed to issue from the throats of a score or more of damned, tortured souls. The listeners followed the sounds and traced them without a shadow of doubt to the stranger's room, the door of which they burst open. They found the stranger upon his knees on the bed in the act of scourging himself with the most relentless severity, his body streaming with blood. On their seizing his hand to arrest the strokes, he begged them to leave him, assuring them that the cause of the disturbance was over, and that in the morning he would explain the reason of the terrible cries that they had heard and the revolting sight that they had seen. After he had pleaded with them for some time they left him and retired to bed.

In the morning some of the hunters went to the stranger's room. He was not there. On examining his bed they found it soaked with blood. One of the club grooms told them that as soon as it was light

the strange gentleman came to the stables, booted and spurred, and wanted his horse to be saddled at once. Directly this was done he vaulted into the saddle and rode out of the yard at full speed. Servants were at once despatched into every part of the county, but not a trace of the strange hunter could be found. He had not been seen by anyone, and his identity was never discovered.

Robert Hunt, a friend of my father, used to relate a story,[1] the truth of which he vouched for, about a phantom horsewoman, who haunted a district in the south-west of Ireland.

John Burke, a relative of Robert Hunt, was out with the Blanktown hounds one day when he heard a cry for help. He rode at once in the direction of the cry and found a small boy trying to extricate a sheep, which had got entangled in a bush. Burke, who was the kindest fellow in the world, dismounted and quickly liberated the silly animal. By the time he had done this and remounted, he discovered to his chagrin that the entire field had disappeared. He rode in the direction that he fancied they had taken, and after a while realized that he had lost his way.

He was debating what to do when he saw a woman, mounted on a very glossy black horse, riding a little way ahead of him. She wore a green riding costume and a broad-brimmed hat with a long drooping feather. Wondering why she was wearing such a queer habit, and who on earth she was—he had not seen her at the meet—Burke tried to overtake her, but no matter how fast he rode the distance between the lady and himself always remained the same, yet without any apparent increase in her speed.

He was strangely attracted by her. She had a slender, graceful figure and sat her horse marvellously well. He could not see her face, but he had the impression that it was beautiful. Her horse moved with a curious gliding motion. Its hoofs made no noise. Burke thought it must be due to the softness of the soil after the recent heavy rain.

On and on the lady rode, with Burke always at the same distance behind her. The land grew more and more barren and desolate. Large grey boulders strewed the ground on either side of the narrow track along which they were careering. Here and there were the gnarled, fantastically fashioned trunks of dead and scanty-leafed trees. The salty tang of the sea was in the air.

Burke saw to his horror that the lady in front of him was rapidly approaching a cliff, far below which stretched the sea, glittering

[1] All names in this story are fictitious, by request.

brightly in the moonbeams. He shouted a warning to the lady but she made no apparent attempt to check her speed and rode recklessly on. His horse, as if magnetized, tore after her.

When close to the brink of the cliff she turned round and for the first time disclosed her face. It was indescribably lovely and wicked. Smiling archly at Burke she beckoned to him to follow her, and disappeared over the cliff. Finding it impossible to curb his horse, Burke uttered a fervent prayer and threw himself from the saddle. He fell heavily and lost consciousness.

When he recovered he staggered to his feet, badly shaken but not injured, and looked over the cliff. The moonlight revealed his horse lying dead on the jagged, naked rocks. There was no sign anywhere of the lovely, wicked lady or her horse.

How he got home Burke never knew. He had not lived long enough in the Blanktown hunt country to hear the story of the Phantom Lady of Death.

About the middle of the 18th century a certain James Fennell bought an estate in the Blanktown hunt country. He spent much of his time abroad, and on one occasion came home with a beautiful foreign lady. He said that she was his wife, but it was generally believed that she was his mistress. He was known to have had quite a number of mistresses. She was an excellent horsewoman and was often seen, mounted on a splendid black horse, riding in the vicinity of the Fennell estate. Violent quarrels were reported to take place frequently between Fennell and the lady, and when she mysteriously disappeared rumours of foul play were circulated.

A year after her disappearance Fennell and his horse were found one day lying on the sea-shore at the foot of the high cliff bordering the beach, with their necks broken. It was surmised that the horse had taken fright at something and, getting out of control, had leaped over the cliff.

After Fennell's death a phantom rider, believed to be the ghost of his foreign mistress, was seen from time to time careering over the Blanktown hunt country. Its appearance always presaged a tragedy. After Burke's miraculous escape, which, like a good Catholic, he attributed to his prayer, the Phantom Lady of Death was never seen again.

POSSESSION AND POLTERGEISTS

EDINBURGH and its environments would seem to have had rather more than their share of reputed hauntings, for I am often reading and hearing of ghostly happenings in and around the ancient Scottish capital.

Baxter relates a case of unusual dual-hauntings that occurred near Edinburgh during his lifetime.[1] He says that there were living within four miles of Edinburgh an aged minister and his son, who occupied different houses in the same locality. Both houses were troubled simultaneously and in the same manner. The inmates of the houses used to hear sounds, as if all the locks, doors and lids of chests and boxes had been burst open. Their clothes, which had been locked in trunks and wardrobes, were found scattered about the floor in the morning. On one occasion they found their best linen had been taken out of cupboards and spread over tables, on which glasses, filled with wine from the cellar of each house, were set. There was rumbling and knocking heard during the night.

A servant-maid in one of the houses said that if she was prevented from sleeping again by noises in her room she would brain the spirit who disturbed her. She took a heavy weight to her room for that purpose, and when she heard the ghostly knocking and rumbling, she threw the weight in the direction of the sounds. It vanished and was never found. Mr. Baxter learned about these happenings from the minister himself, but he does not say whether the minister and his son left their abodes in consequence of the disturbances.

Mr. Baxter in the same book relates a case of possession in Scotland. It was told him by the Duke of Lauderdale. In the town of Duns there was living, during the boyhood of the Duke, a poor woman, who was believed to be possessed by a spirit. Mr. John Weems, minister of Duns, visited her several times, and on one occasion, when he was accompanied by the Duke and several other people, he made a remark to the Duke in Latin, whereupon the woman spoke in Latin. As they all knew her to be a poor, ignorant person, they came away convinced that the rumours about her being possessed by a spirit were true, and that the voice which they had heard coming from her was not her own voice, but that of the possessing spirit.

[1] *News from the Invisible World*, by T. Otway.

Another case of ghostly disturbances of a very energetic kind took place near Haddington.[1] A girl named Isabel Heriot was maid of all work to the clergyman of a village within a few miles of Haddington. "She was of a low stature, small and slender, with a very dark complexion. Her head was somewhat awry upon her neck." She was very droll and fond of playing tricks and making fun of people.

The clergyman took a dislike to her and gave her notice to leave his house. Soon after she left she was taken very ill, her face became darker than ever, and she died in great pain. Two or three nights after her burial, Isabel Murray, the girl who took her place at the parsonage, saw her ghost, clad in a winding-sheet, walk from the village church to the parsonage. A few nights afterwards stones were flung at the parsonage; some passed over the roof, others came in through doors and windows. They fell softly and did no harm.

One night, however, just as the clergyman was entering the house, a large stone was flung at him. It narrowly missed him and struck a door with great force, making a dent in it. Isabel Murray was hit by several stones, and a groom, who was tending to the horses, was gripped by the heel so hard that he screamed. Stones and clods and lighted coals flew about, and even an old horse-comb, long since lost, was constantly whirling around the parsonage house and grounds.

Isabel Murray had another encounter with the ghost. She said that as she was returning home from church on a Sunday, she saw the ghost of Isabel Heriot. "Her face was black like the mouten soot, the very colour which it had been when she died." She was carrying a lot of stones in her apron. She threw them down when Isabel Murray approached her and asked her what she was doing.

The ghost replied: "I come because I wronged my master when I was his servant. For it was I who stole his watch, which I hid under the hearthstone in the kitchen. When I left the parsonage I took it to the Canongate and tried to sell it to a French woman. In response to her question as to where I obtained it, I told her that I had found it between Leith and Edinburgh."

The ghost of Isabel Heriot also said that when she was riding home late one night from marketing, her horse stumbled near the Head of Fanside Brae, and upon her crying out, "The Devil raise thee," an evil spirit appeared and threatened to throw her into a

[1] *The Invisible World*, by Prof. George Sinclair.

pit by the side of the road if she did not kill her master, the clergyman. Isabel promised to kill him.

She met the evil spirit again at Elfiston Mill, near Ormiston, and later on at Knockhills. A man named Thomas Anderson, who was a churchgoer, was with her, and the evil spirit told her to kill him. She refused, and the evil spirit threw a sack of corn that was on the back of her horse onto the ground, and she had to dismount to get it. She confessed that she had often cheated her master out of money, and said that the stones she had flung, and which had hit Isabel Murray, had gone astray; she had intended that they should strike the clergyman, who had once flung her out of the house and into a pit. The ghost made such dreadful grimaces and looked so indescribably evil that Isabel Murray was terrified and ran home.

The ghost of Isabel Heriot never appeared again, and no more supernatural disturbances occurred at the parsonage.

DANGEROUS CONTINENTAL GHOSTS

THE GIRL IN THE COFFIN

ONE Saturday evening in February, 1851, a carriage drove up to the door of a carpenter's shop in the neighbourhood of the rue Saint-Honoré.[1] A gentleman in a black coat, his hat drawn low over his forehead, entered the shop and enquired for the owner. The owner appeared and asked what service he could render. The gentleman told him that he required a workman who could execute repairs that very evening.

The owner of the shop acquiesced and entrusted the job to a young carpenter. Armed with the tools that he was told would be necessary, the young carpenter entered the strange gentleman's carriage, and was driven up the Champs-Elysées Avenue towards the Place de l'Etoile.

The carriage stopped a little way beyond the Place de l'Etoile, and the gentleman informed the young man that it would be necessary to bandage his eyes, as the job for which he was needed had to be executed in the greatest secrecy. The young man would not consent at first, but eventually agreed and allowed the gentleman to bandage his eyes.

The carriage drove on and very shortly stopped again. The young man was lifted out of the carriage by two masked men, who carried him into a building and down a number of stone steps. The bandage was removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a large cellar containing a pile of deal boards. The gentleman told him to make a coffin out of the boards, and threatened to shoot him if he refused.

After he had made the coffin he was led into an inner cellar, and told that he must stay there until he was wanted. There was a hole in one of the walls of the cellar, through which he could see a water-butt, and he was straining his eyes in an endeavour to see some other object that might aid him to identify the building when he was summoned to the outer cellar. There to his astonishment he saw a lovely young girl, who was on her knees with her hands clasped in front of her.

"You fiends!" she exclaimed. "I know that you are going to kill me, but I beg you to spare him."

[1] *Farley's Bristol Journal*, February, 1851.

a chilly sensation when they passed by it. Children were much too scared by the look of it and by the stories they had heard about the haunting to linger in close proximity to it, and if a ball, thrown carelessly by one of them, fell into any of the grounds of the house, no one ever dared to venture in quest of it. People never occupied the house for long, and more than one mysterious death was rumoured to have taken place within its forbidding walls.

It was the cheapness of the house that tempted M. Divorne to buy it. To acquire a commodious house and large grounds freehold, and within about fifty miles of Paris, for a quarter the price he had paid for the house in which he was living, was wonderful.

It was a thousand pities Madame Divorne was not altogether satisfied. She complained that the Grey House would not be easy to run with only two servants, a cook and a housemaid; there were so many stairs and so few modern conveniences. Moreover there was something in the atmosphere of the house that she did not like. She could not very easily describe the something, but it depressed her and imparted a feeling almost of dread.

M. Divorne only laughed and declared that it was just her fancy, that she would get over it when the house has been touched up a bit and made to look a little more cheerful. It merely needed new wallpapers and a few roaring fires to make it very cosy.

"I like the house," he told her. "There is plenty of space, and that will be a treat after having been cooped up for so long in a small town villa. The fresh country air will do us all the world of good. There will be no need to buy fruit or vegetables. We shall be able to grow all we want, and if we have more than we need for ourselves we can sell it. Fowls, too! We can have new-laid eggs every day."

He tried very hard to infect Madame Divorne and his children with his enthusiasm for the Grey House. There were six children. Henri the eldest was an accountant; Louise, a good-looking brunette, was a typist and stenographer; Pierre, who was just eighteen years of age, was a clerk in a solicitor's office; Marie, the second girl, was a manicurist; Henriette and Maxime were still at school.

They were all quite ignorant of the ill reputation which the Grey House bore in the locality, and the agent, through whose medium M. Divorne bought the property, refrained very discreetly from alluding to it.

The family did not move into the Grey House until the papering

of the walls and painting of the doors and windows was finished, and everything was in readiness for the newcomers. Monsieur and Madame Divorne were the first to arrive; the rest of the family were unable to come till later in the day.

The behaviour of the dogs, Raoul and Muffin, struck Madame Divorne as odd. They evinced great reluctance to enter the grounds and still greater reluctance to enter the house. Usually on going to a place that they had not been to before, they would wander around and do a little investigation, but instead of doing this, when they entered the Grey House they kept close to Madame Divorne and seemed very much afraid. Their behaviour puzzled Madame Divorne, and she wondered if they sensed the something unpleasant in the house and grounds which she sensed. It was not until the dogs had been in the building for some minutes that they appeared to be a little more at ease.

M. Divorne was right when he described the Grey House as commodious; it was in the sense of being roomy, for the hall was spacious, the staircase wide, and most of the rooms were large, with high ceilings and wide chimneys. But even with the new paint and paper there was still a curious gloom about the interior of the building. Madame Divorne felt it. M. Divorne did not appear to notice it.

Except for the dogs being very restless during the day and whining and growling at night, nothing unusual or in any way alarming occurred until the Divornes had been in the house for several weeks.

It was one night, about the middle of September, that Louise awoke to hear the dogs barking and then sounds as if something was being rolled or pushed across the floor of the landing over her head. Wondering what it could be, she sat up in bed and listened. Presently there was a queer bumping sound, followed by another, and then another, as if some heavy object, like a barrel, was coming down the stairs. She got up, switched on the light and opened the door.

The staircase was at the far end of the landing but the moonlight, pouring through a window above it, enabled her to see it tolerably clearly. The bumping reached the landing on which she stood, continued across it, and went on down the wide staircase into the hall. A few moments later there was a loud crash, as if a quantity of crockery had fallen or been thrown from a height on to a stone floor. After that there was a deep and prolonged silence.

Up to now Louise had been more curious than actually scared. She had seen nothing, but there was something so eerie and frightening in the silence that she sprang back to her room, locked the door and scrambled into bed. She kept the light on until the dawn had broken.

At breakfast she enquired if anyone had heard anything in the night. Henriette said she had heard queer noises. Henriette's and her account of the alarming sounds were received with scepticism by all the family, with the exception of Madame Divorne, who appeared to be greatly concerned.

Two days later the cook and housemaid complained that there was something wrong with the drains. They said that on their way to bed the previous night they had been nearly suffocated by a vile stink. It was on the back staircase, leading from the basement to their quarters in the rear of the house.

M. Divorne was puzzled and sceptical. He told them that he could not understand how the drains could be at fault, as before buying the house he had had them thoroughly tested, and they had been found to be in a very satisfactory condition.

What the maids said, however, was very shortly confirmed by an experience that befell Henri. He was resting his elbows on the window-sill of his bedroom early one evening, gazing at the moonlit lawn and the white, glimmering road in the distance, when he fell into a reverie, from which he was abruptly aroused and brought sharply back to earth by the barking and growling of the dogs, and a sensation of great coldness, which turned into one of loathing, when his nostrils were assailed by an overpowering stench. It was so dreadful that he quickly threw open the window and, in order to rid himself of the stink, inhaled deep breaths of the cool night air.

Hearing a strange noise behind him, he turned round and saw a tall object move across the floor and disappear by the door. It was too vague and shadowy for him to discern at all distinctly, but he got the impression of something unpleasantly bizarre, and was so terrified that he fled downstairs to the drawing-room, where the rest of the family were gathered.

Into their astonished ears, as soon as he had recovered breath, he poured a somewhat confused account of what had happened. M. Divorne attributed it to his imagination but at the same time showed symptoms of uneasiness. The next day something occurred to augment that uneasiness in no small measure.

He was sitting by the dining-room fire reading, when a cold current of air made him shiver. Glancing round to see whence it proceeded, he saw the door was wide open. Thinking it odd because he remembered shutting it, but supposing that he had not latched it properly, or that someone had opened it without his hearing him or her, he closed it carefully and resumed his reading. He had, however, only been occupied thus for a few minutes when he again felt a cold blast of air sweep past him, and turning he perceived that the door was again wide open. He rose and was about to go to the door to close it when he was aware of a foul smell. It seemed to come from the doorway, and although he could see nothing to account for it, he had the distinct feeling that something had entered the room and was standing looking at him. He got the impression of a body in the last stages of putrefaction. Unable to stand the smell, he fled to the french window, tore it open, and made an undignified, precipitate exit into the garden.

He was very badly scared, but not wanting to prejudice the family still more against the house, he kept the incident to himself. It was in the garden that the next happening of a disturbing nature occurred.

Marie and Henriette were strolling about the lawn one fine Sunday afternoon, when the twilight was gradually deepening and a half moon was gleaming faintly in the darkening autumn sky. Feeling someone was behind them, Marie looked hastily round but saw nothing. They went on, and still fancied that someone was following them. The feeling was so acute that they were obliged to keep looking round, and each time the result was the same. No one was visible.

They came to a junction of several paths. Close to it was an old covered-in well, which had not been used for very many years. They paused to look at it, for it had a strange fascination for them. While they were gazing at it something, that they could not see, rushed past them. A moment or two afterwards they heard a splash, as if something very heavy had fallen into the well. They were so frightened that they ran back to the house, and all the way to it heard footsteps bounding along after them.

That night Marie woke and saw a shadowy funereal pall descend from the ceiling on to the bed in which Henriette was sleeping. It assumed the outlines of a coffin. She sat up in terror. The pall vanished. Her scream roused Henriette, who asked if anything had happened. Marie pretended that she had had a bad dream. Neither

of the girls went to sleep again; they lay awake talking until the morning.

A week after this incident the cook and the housemaid gave notice to leave. They said that they could not sleep at night because of the alarming noises, and that they had had more than enough of the abominable smells.

Madame Divorne could not get any maids to sleep in the house, and had difficulty in obtaining two daily women, who could not be persuaded to stay after it began to get dusk. As a result, Madame Divorne, assisted by one of the girls, had to get the dinner. M. Divorne still professed to be in love with the house, but there were signs of increasing discontent among the other members of the family.

One day, when the girls and Maxime were in one of the side gardens, there was a curious noise seemingly behind a bush that grew close to a wall. Both dogs growled and their hair bristled.

"Go seek, Raoul," Maxime cried. "Go on, fetch 'em out. See who's there."

Thus urged, Raoul, with obvious reluctance, pushed his way into the bush, disappeared for a few seconds, and then rushed out with his tail drooping, looking very badly scared.

Maxime went behind the bush and searched it well, but could not discover anything to account for the dog's behaviour. The next day Raoul would not touch his food or leave his kennel. He stayed there all curled up, and so obviously ill that M. Divorne had a vet to see him. The vet frankly admitted that he did not quite know what was the matter with Raoul. He thought that he may have had a bad fright. He gave him some medicine, but it did not do Raoul any good, and he died a day or two after.

Everyone in the house was upset, for the Divornes were great animal-lovers, and they were all very fond of Raoul. Maxime was certain that something in the bush, some hidden horror, was responsible for Raoul's death. A rough-haired fox terrier puppy was bought to keep Muffin company.

For more than a week the Divornes enjoyed a respite from the smells, but much anxiety was caused by the indisposition of Henriette. The local doctor, who was called in, at first attributed it to indigestion, then to gastric trouble, after that to megrim, and finally to a combination of all three. His remedies were of no avail.

Madame Divorne was sure that it was the atmosphere of the

house, which was bad for them all, and begged her husband to sell or let the place. This he would not do.

"Henriette's illness has nothing to do with the house," he said. "She would probably have been ill in Nantes, where we used to live. She's been working too hard. They give her too many lessons at school. She needs a good long holiday and plenty of fresh air. That will do her more good than any physic. We haven't given this house a proper trial yet. Wait another six months, and if anything unpleasant occurs during that time, a repetition of those stinks, for instance, I will do as you suggest and quit; though we shall never find another so suitable a place, suitable in every way. Rooms, space, gardens, situation, everything that we want."

Madame Divorne sighed. She realized the hopelessness of arguing with him. Never was there such a pig-headed, mulish man. A more potent influence than any argument was, however, impending. M. Divorne was very much a person of habit and routine. He awoke and got up always about the same time every day, and as regularly had his meals and went for a constitutional. If the weather was fine he spent a certain restricted time in the garden; if wet, he stayed indoors and read—for the improvement of his mind, he told the family. The finding of some of his literature, carefully hidden away, created considerable amusement and some cynicism in the finders.

His bedroom was somewhat isolated. It was the only room in a short passage or corridor leading out of the first landing. He liked it because the dormer window commanded an extensive view of one of the lawns and the country beyond. It had a wide old-fashioned chimney and a large cupboard, deep-set in the wall. There was a gloom even on a bright, sunny day, but that M. Divorne professed not to mind.

Not feeling too well one night during the last week of November, he went to bed a trifle earlier than usual, and the weather being stormy and bitterly cold he had a coal fire in his room. The elements increased in violence as the night advanced. The wind howled and whistled down the chimney and beat the snow and ivy leaves against the window with a fury that threatened to break the glass.

M. Divorne lost no time in undressing and getting into bed. For a long time he lay listening to the wind and the flaking sound of ashes as they fell on to the hearth, and watching the grotesque shadows cast on the ceiling by the flickering fire flames. Drowsiness at last stealing over him, he relapsed into a deep, dreamless sleep.

He woke with a wild shriek of the wind ringing in his ears, and was conscious of a vile, nauseating smell. Raising himself up in bed and opening his eyes, he received a terrible shock. Standing at the foot of the bed, its horrible head thrust aggressively forward, was a tall, nude, luminous figure. Its face was that of a corpse in an advanced state of decomposition. The livid, scaly flesh seemed to be falling from the bones; the rotting lips were wreathed in a leer that revealed long, jagged, yellow teeth; only the pale, slanting eyes were alive. They were fixed on M. Divorne with an expression of malicious glee. A gruesome, leadenish blue light enveloped the whole body.

The shock M. Divorne experienced, on beholding such an appalling spectacle, was so great that he fainted, and it was not for some time after he had recovered consciousness that he ventured to open his eyes. The figure had vanished, the fire was out, and the room was in darkness. Daylight seemed an age in coming. Seldom had M. Divorne been so thankful as he was when a rap on the door announced the arrival of his early cup of coffee.

He did not tell the family what he had seen. They guessed from his face that he had had none too good a night, and their suspicions increased when he told them that he had come round to their way of thinking, and considered it wisest after all to vacate the house.

Fortunately for the Divornes the scramble for houses rendered it easy to sell the Grey House, and they were lucky enough to find new quarters almost at once. The move into other surroundings put new life into Henriette, whose mysterious malady took a turn for the better directly she left the Grey House.

Curious to learn something about the history of the Grey House, Pierre made numerous enquiries and learned eventually that on its site there had once been a very ancient mansion. Horrible deeds were alleged to have taken place within its grim and sinister walls, and for that reason not only the building itself but the ground on which it stood was accursed. Misfortune overtook all who occupied it.

The De Morvelles, into whose hands the estate passed in the 17th century, met with nothing but trouble and disaster all the time they owned it. They sold it to the Lantiéres. During the Lantiéres' occupation of the house a mysterious fire occurred one night, and only the bare, blackened walls were left standing.

The Godeuils, who bought the estate from the Lantiéres, had the ruin of the old mansion cleared away, and a new house erected

on its site. The life of the new house was short. It was levelled to the ground during the French Revolution. Its inmates, the dead and living, were thrown into a well by the enemies of the Aristocrats. A few years after the Revolution the Grey House was built. At first it was a private residence, and then it became an inn, which acquired a very evil reputation. After the death of the landlord the Grey House once again became a private residence. Those who owned it always appeared to be only too glad to get rid of it.

If what Pierre Divorne learned about the history of the Grey House and about that of its predecessors was true, one can hardly be surprised that the place was haunted. Accursed places exude baleful influences and act as magnets to all kinds of evil spirits.

THE MAN IN FLANNELS

THE following story was told me when I was staying in Montparnasse shortly before the 1914 War.[1]

Near the ancient city of B—— in Western Europe there is a bridge over a precipitous gorge. The bridge would seem to have a peculiar attraction for suicides, some of whom travel many miles to take the fatal plunge. Except at Easter and during the summer months, the traffic over the bridge is not very great. The scenery on either side is very beautiful. The heights are thickly clothed with a great variety of trees, some of whose lateral branches protrude far over the edge of the cliffs. At the foot of the rocks, and occupying nearly all the intervening space, flows a deep, swift-flowing river, which at times becomes a roaring torrent.

One feels when standing on the bridge and gazing into the sombre depths a horrible fascination for the river; the dark, horrid, swerving, shrieking water seems to rise slowly up, and with its cold, baleful breath to suck one into its seething bosom. The desire to fall, to plunge down, down, down into the rushing, foaming torrent, surges through one's mind. The lot of the toll-men who are on duty at night is by no means enviable.

At the end of the last century one of the toll-men was a tall, thin, red-haired, lantern-jawed individual named Lief Krass. He was a strong sabbatarian and regarded any kind of recreation on a

[1] The narrator, an artist, declared that it was founded on fact; that she had been particularly requested not to divulge the real name of the chief character in the story or the locality of the bridge.

Sunday as a sin. One early autumn Sunday evening he was so overcome at the sight of a man actually in white flannel trousers and carrying a lawn tennis racket on Sunday that he forgot to ask him to pay the usual toll money until he had reached the middle of the bridge. "Hi, you!" he then shouted indignantly. "Come back, you've not paid the toll money."

The stranger stopped, turned slowly round, so that Krass could see every line and feature in his face, and then without saying a word he climbed over the railing at the side of the bridge and dropped into the river.

Too horror-stricken to move or utter a sound, Krass saw him go right down, turning over and over, his white face and clothes standing out in ghastly contrast to the dark background, till he struck the black, swirling inferno, when he was instantly whirled out of sight. It was not until he had been swept away by the rushing water that Krass fully realized what had happened.

"My God," he said, "and I might have stopped him! It was his clothes and the racket. That's what happens when people won't keep the sabbath."

He at once reported the tragedy to the police. A search was made for the suicide's body, but with no result. His identity was never known.

The following Sunday evening Krass was on duty as usual in the toll-house. The weather was cold and raw, a heavy mist hung over the gorge. There had been but little traffic all day, and after nightfall the bridge and the adjoining roads were absolutely deserted. Minute after minute passed, and Krass could hear nothing but the creaking and groaning of iron girders and the distant thunder of rushing water, the echoes of which sounded and resounded through the whole length of the frightful chasm, and out into the ponderous stillness of the foggy night air.

There had been a time when Krass, who was very unimaginative and always well fortified with the scriptures, had not minded the loneliness of his nocturnal vigils. Seated in his cosy little room, a blazing fire in front of him and a jug of hot coffee on the hob, he had laughed at the wind and rain, and all the uncanny sounds accompanying them in the gorge. But now, with the vision of the ghastly, white-faced, falling suicide still vivid in his memory, the darkness and loneliness of the night scared him. He found himself continually listening, why and for what he did not know.

Once he fancied he heard footsteps hurriedly approaching the

bridge. He sprang from his seat, opened the little window at which he took his payments, apprehensively searched the gloom with his eyes, and listened. He had been fooled. What he had heard were not footsteps, only the flapping of some loose timber. He returned to the fire, trembling.

Presently he heard a queer sound. He was on his feet again, his ears strained. Badly frightened, he opened the window and peered into the surrounding darkness. From the gorge rose a cry, shrill, agonizing, awful, as of someone in deadly fear or pain. It seemed to quiver for a moment in the air, and then went sobbing and wailing down the mist-ridden gorge. It was an unearthly sound that chilled the blood in Krass's veins. He was closing the window when something whirled past him. He shrank away from the window, startled. The thing whirled by again, and he forced a laugh. It was only a bird. He sank into his chair, shaking.

By and by he fell asleep and awoke with a violent start. A faint glow of light dissipated the darkness outside the house, and threw into relief patches of masonry, imparting to them a ghostly whiteness. Krass was at first frightened, then he laughed. The whiteness was due to the dawn. Nothing supernatural.

The air felt icy, colder than he ever remembered it in the early autumn. He shivered and drew his coat tightly round him. Footsteps. In a moment all his faculties were keenly alert. Who could it be at two o'clock in the morning? His nerves were anyhow. He looked out of the window, fearful of what he might see.

Advancing towards him in the pale light of the dawn was a man in white flannels, carrying a lawn tennis racket in one hand. When he drew nearer to the bridge Krass recognized him. He was the suicide, the man Krass had seen falling from the bridge. He walked past the toll-house, just as he had done the night of the tragedy. When he reached the middle of the bridge, he turned and looked menacingly at Krass. He then climbed over the railing, looked again at Krass, grinned and dropped into the yawning chasm. Krass saw him turn head over heels as he fell, down and down, into the foaming, roaring river. It was not until he disappeared that Krass fully realized he was a phantom, and that what had just taken place was a ghostly re-enaction of the tragedy which had occurred on the previous Sunday.

Krass did not tell anyone except his wife and daughter about the ghost, but he asked the local authorities to let him be on duty during the day instead of at night. To this they reluctantly con-

sented, and the following Sunday about noon found Krass seated in his favourite chair in the toll-house. He behaved so queerly, however, continually accusing people of wanting to throw themselves over the bridge, that he was dismissed from his post.

A few days later a labourer and his wife were crossing the bridge on their way home when they heard someone running after them. It was Krass.

"He's after me! He's after me!" Krass cried. "For mercy's sake stop him!"

"Stop him? Stop whom?" the labourer exclaimed.

"That man in flannels," Krass said. "He gives me no peace. Don't let him catch me. Keep him off." And with a fearful scream he climbed over the railing and dropped into the river.

After his suicide the authorities found it very difficult to get men to do night duty in the toll-houses. No one remained in them for more than a few nights. They all declared that the bridge was haunted not by one dreadful apparition but by several.

The toll-houses were finally abolished, but not the spectres, for up to the time I heard this strange story rumours of ghostly happenings on the bridge were in constant circulation.

DANGEROUS AMERICAN GHOSTS

TERROR IN THE FAR WEST

According to James Grant, Iceland is rich in legends and traditional stories of ghostly phenomena. One of the most remarkable of the stories is the following:

A lady of considerable means stated in her will that she wished to be buried in a spot far from where she lived. The person who inherited her property wilfully disregarded her request. He told the undertaker to deposit her remains anywhere he chose. The undertaker did as he was bidden, and the coffin was buried close to the house in which the lady had died.[1]

After interring her remains the undertaker and his men returned to the lady's house, and were carousing there, when her ghost, wrapped in a winding-sheet, suddenly appeared and shook its clenched hand menacingly at them. Scared to death, they rushed out of the house and never ventured to enter it again. A herdsman who had been with them in the house was found the next day dead in bed. A man named Thorold, who was a seer and an associate of the person who inherited the lady's estate, contacted the herdsman's ghost, and died from fright.

Poltergeist disturbances took place nightly in the house where the lady had dwelt. Furniture and kitchen utensils were flung about by invisible hands. Horrible figures pounced out on people from cupboards and dark corners. A phantom, with a body resembling a seal and the head of a long-dead human corpse, rose from the floor of the kitchen and frightened the people who saw it to such an extent that one of them died and another went mad. A boat mysteriously overturned on the river near the lady's house, and the three people in it were drowned. Their ghosts, the herdsman's ghost and Thorold's ghost all haunted the lady's house and the neighbouring village.

People fled from the locality in terror. A priest finally summoned up the courage to visit the haunted house and the adjoining land and exorcize the ghosts. The hauntings then ceased.

Hauntings quite as terrifying as those in Iceland have occurred from time to time in and around a valley in the Indian territory of Tishomingo in the United States. Fighting between invisible antagonists is heard in the air over the valley before any grave epidemic or serious trouble among the Indians.

[1] Vide *Mysteries of All Nations*.

In May, 1892, John Willis, a United States marshal, was belated in the valley one night. He had not heard that it was haunted. He slept on a rock and was awakened by his horse stamping on the ground. He sprang up, thinking that the horse was scared by coyotes. The valley was illuminated by the light of the full moon. He saw nothing, but heard terrible noises in the air—sounds of blows, cries of agony, pleadings for mercy, groans, and thuds of stricken bodies. His horse was terrified, and he was too frightened to move.

He remained in one spot until the sounds ceased, when he at once mounted and sped from the valley as fast as his horse could carry him. The following day a serious epidemic broke out in Tishomingo.

Ghostly happenings of a somewhat similar kind are said to occur in the Cañon of the Lost Souls in Colorado. There are few ravines in the world that inspire one with greater awe. The sides of the ravine are broken and scarred as if some demon, possessing titanic power, had charged and struck them. According to a very old tradition, a company of Spanish soldiers who entered the sombre ravine were never seen again. They were generally supposed to have been killed by the evil spirits that haunted the ravine. At night-time their cries of terror and agony can still be heard above the roaring of the river that rushes furiously through the gorge.

In the early nineties of the last century I visited Crater Lake in Oregon, and camped out for several nights in the forest bordering it. I was immeasurably impressed at the sight of the lake, and could hardly credit that the vast expanse of placid green water, which seemed to be so near to me, was more than a thousand feet below the brink of the cliff on which I was standing. In those days few tourists ever visited the lake, and it still bore a very eerie reputation.

Backwoodsmen who had lived for many years in the forest, and Indians belonging to the Rogue River Reservation, told strange tales of ghostly happenings in the regions that were in close proximity to the lake. The Indians firmly believed that the lake was the abode of evil spirits that tempted people to throw themselves over the cliffs.

One of these spirits was a female phantom, of far greater beauty than the lovely Pocahontas, daughter of Powhatan, who rescued Captain John Smith when her father was on the point of killing him. If this beautiful spirit encountered a solitary young man in the region of Crater Lake she smiled invitingly at him. Few youths could look at her without succumbing to her charms. Her eyes enthralled them. They made violent love to her, and directly they

kissed her lovely, enticing lips their doom was fixed. She reciprocated their passion for a time, and then led them to the lake and told them to leap into it, enfolded in her caressing arms. This they did without a protest, and their souls passed for ever into the keeping of the diabolical spirits of Crater Lake.

Another of the ghosts said to haunt the neighbourhood of the lake was a black stag. It magnetically attracted all men who saw it and compelled them to chase it to the lake. On arriving there it leaped into the distant water, and the men who had followed it leaped after it, always to their death. The lake, I am told, is still reputed to be haunted.

The Devil's Pool, a basin 150 feet wide, worn in the rock of the White Mountains, New Hampshire, was reputed to be haunted long before a white man landed in America. The first time that white men visited the White Mountains the Indians warned them not to linger near the Devil's Pool, and assured them that should they dally there they would see phantoms of such horrible shapes that they would either die from fright or become raving mad. Now the White Mountains attract crowds of tourists every summer, but notwithstanding their presence some of the terrifying spirits are rumoured to hover around the pool and hills even yet.

Very weird and extraordinary tales are told of the Lone Rocks in Monument Park, Colorado. These rocks are stone pillars or columns of varying heights, crowned with wide, flat boulders that are not unlike broad-brimmed bats. Seen in the moonlight the grotesqueness of these pillars is liable to have a very scaring effect on people who are at all imaginative.

Like some of the ancient tribes in Asia and Europe, the Red Indians of America believed that every mountain, rock, river, tree and cave harboured a spirit. They declared that the Lone Rock Pillars emitted gruesome blue lights at night, and out of them emerged fantastic figures that danced about in the moonlight and took a fiendish delight in frightening any living creature that came near them.

Two tourists, who visited the rocks about the beginning of the present century, were making fun of their queer crowns when one of the tourists felt a violent blow on his back. He turned quickly round, but saw no one. That night he was taken suddenly ill and died. The Indians and the old settlers in Colorado believed that anyone who laughed at the Lone Rocks was sure to experience grave misfortune within the next twenty-four hours.

A HAUNTED FAMILY

IN THE old *Argosy*[1] of 1879 there is an account of a very harrowing family haunting in Canada.

Miss Anne Ducane and her sister, Louise, were spending the summer with their friends, the Whittakers, who lived on the outskirts of Montreal. The Whittaker family consisted of Major Whittaker, his two sisters and their niece, Lucy, who was a very pretty, smart young girl.

The Laurels, where the Whittakers lived, was a long, low, rambling building. It was situated about fifty yards from the main road to Montreal. Two large wooden gates led to a broad, winding gravel drive, which was edged on each side with laurel bushes. In front of the house was a wide, well-kept lawn, and in the rear an exclusive garden, orchard and fields. The front door of the house was made of oak. It was very old and weather-stained. On it were marks which showed the place that was formerly occupied by a large iron knocker. For some peculiar reason the knocker had been removed. There was only now a wire-bell.

Major Whittaker, who had always been very lively and sociable, had recently become very religious and taciturn.

One evening his niece and the Ducanes were about to go for a walk, when he sternly forbade them to leave the house. He told them that a bad storm was brewing. The sky was then quite clear, but it soon darkened. The wind moaned and whistled round the old house, and the rain beat against the windows. The storm became more and more violent. Windows rattled, doors jarred, and the rain came down in torrents. Very gradually the fury of the storm abated, and calmness reigned once again.

The stillness was presently broken by the sound of a heavy carriage coming along the drive at a furious rate. The three girls, who wondered who could be coming to the house at so late an hour—it was nearly ten o'clock—went to the front door and were about to look out, when Major Whittaker dragged them back. He shut the door and locked and bolted it. He had hardly done so when the carriage stopped outside the house, and the next moment there was a violent knocking, as if with an iron knocker.

Major Whittaker, who was greatly agitated, bade everyone in

[1] Edited by Mrs. Henry Wood.

the house kneel down in the hall, while he prayed to be delivered from the evil spirits that haunted his family. By degrees the knocking grew fainter and finally ceased. The three girls, who had been terrified during the knocking, ran into the room in which they all slept, and peered out of the window.

It no longer rained, and the drive and lawn were bathed in moonlight. There was no sign of the phantom carriage. In the morning Mr. Lefroy, a friend of Major Whittaker, came to the house. On being told about the ghostly knocking he examined the carriage drive and found traces of a heavy vehicle and hoof marks in the gravel. He and the Major's sisters strongly advised the Ducanes to terminate their visit and leave the house as soon as possible.

They arranged to go the following day and wanted to take Lucy with them, but her aunts said: "She must stay. She is one of us and must learn to endure the ghostly happenings in our family with the same fortitude as we and our forbears have always endured them."

That night Anne Ducane was awakened by her sister, who pointed in terror at the door. It was opening very slowly, and the two girls saw a tall hooded figure in long, flowing garments silently enter the room with long monkish strides. When it was half-way across the floor it turned and looked at Louise with evil, gleaming eyes. She murmured a prayer, and after remaining stationary for a few moments, still regarding her fixedly, it gradually faded away. The Ducanes roused Lucy, and the three girls remained awake with a candle burning until the morning.

After breakfast Anne and Louise packed their things and, accompanied by Lucy Whittaker, went for a final stroll in the lovely old-world garden in the rear of the house.

They were walking along one of the paths that intersected it when they were suddenly conscious of someone following them. Lucy and Louise felt a cold hand touch them. They screamed, turned round and froze. The hooded figure which they had seen in the night confronted them. It did not look at Anne but at Lucy and Louise. Anne at once crossed herself and uttered a prayer, whereupon the apparition wheeled round and strode silently away, disappearing from view round a bend in the path.

They ran to the house and told the eldest Miss Whittaker that they had seen the horrible ghost in the garden.

"So long as it did not stare at you or touch you," she said, "no harm will befall you."

he left his home. His shoes and handkerchief, stained with blood, were found in a thicket in the Hollow, but his body was never discovered. It was generally believed that he had been murdered by a band of Indians who had been causing considerable trouble in the neighbourhood.

Late one afternoon, twenty years after the mysterious murder of the farmer's son, a horseman, accompanied by two big dogs, stopped at an inn a few miles from the Hollow and ordered a meal. While he was eating he chatted with the landlord, who advised him on no account to go through Whooping Hollow on his way to his destination.

The horseman, who was a stranger in that part of New England, wanted to know the landlord's reason for wanting him to avoid Whooping Hollow. The landlord then told him about the murder, and said that the Hollow was haunted by very evil and dangerous spirits, that people who had entered it alone after nightfall had died from fright or become gibbering maniacs. He also explained that the valley was called the Whooping Valley because of the extraordinary noise that was made by the ghost of the murdered boy. The traveller laughed and declared that it would take more than a ghost to scare him.

Having paid for his meal, he mounted his steed and, disregarding the landlord's warning, aimed for Whooping Hollow. The route along which he travelled was for some distance tolerably smooth and level, but it gradually became very rough and uneven. His horse stumbled several times and almost unseated him, while, to add to his difficulties, the young moon was constantly obscured by heavy clouds. When it was visible its pale light enabled him to see that the track—it could hardly be termed a road—led precipitously down into a profound and rugged valley, which he thought must be the alleged badly haunted Whooping Hollow.

He scanned the scene attentively and distinctly saw the dark green tops of many trees waving in the cool night breeze. His horse was very reluctant to proceed any further, and he had great difficulty in making it descend the steep path that led into the distant hollow. No sound broke the silence except the tramping of his horse's feet and the faint pattering of the dogs. So deep was the valley that even the wind, which had swept in occasional great gusts over the surface of the plateau that he had just left, could hardly be felt.

The descent seemed interminable but he at length reached the bottom of the gloomy chasm. The moon, which suddenly shone

with great brilliancy, revealed a wild and rugged scene. The track abruptly widened, and on either side of it he could discern fantastically fashioned trunks of trees, and in between them large queer-shaped masses of stone that gleamed a ghostly white in the moonlight. The silence that had hitherto been so profound was now broken by the noise made by a stream as, swollen by recent rain, it swept furiously through the valley.

The horseman had reached a point where the stream intersected the track, and was spanned by a wide wooden bridge, when he fancied he saw something large moving through the uncertain gloom. He observed it more closely and perceived to his surprise that it was a boy, who was without a hat and carried in one hand something like a bundle or satchel. He was on the other side of the stream, about thirty yards ahead of the horseman, and walking in the same direction.

The horseman crossed the bridge and urged his steed forward with the intention of overtaking the youthful pedestrian. To his astonishment, no matter how fast his horse went, the distance between him and the boy remained the same. The boy never seemed to alter his pace but kept advancing with the same unvarying, deliberate strides. The horseman called out: "What-ho! Who are you?" The boy did not reply or evince by any gesture the slightest consciousness of the horseman's presence. The horseman repeated the salutation and again tried to overtake the boy, but with the same result. The distance between them remained the same.

The horseman began to feel nervous. Why no reply? he wondered. Was the boy deaf? And why could he not overtake the boy? He suddenly realized that although the boy was only a short distance ahead of him and was travelling over similarly rough, rocky ground, his steps made no noise. To make certain, the horseman stopped his horse, held his breath and listened very intently; but he could hear no sounds except the gurglings and splashings of the swift-flowing stream.

His dogs, although usually fearless and very high-spirited, lagged behind him, whining and apparently badly scared. His horse trembled violently and was more and more reluctant to proceed. The obvious terror experienced by the animals infected the horseman. In spite of his scepticism he felt a superstitious fear stealing fast over him. It increased immeasurably when it suddenly dawned on him that what he had thought was a boy, a creature of flesh and blood like himself, was not of this world at all, but a ghost.

The surrounding silence seemed no longer natural but unearthly, and eager to hear any sound that was accountable he shouted again. The sound of his voice thus exerted in the utter solitude, and followed by a stillness broken only by the turbulent stream, had in it something so uncannily thrilling that he did not dare to shout again.

The apparition, which still maintained the same distance ahead of him, now entered a thicket and was no longer visible. A few minutes after it had vanished from sight there was a cry, or rather a whoop, followed almost immediately by a yell of agony and frightful screams and groans. These sounds were succeeded by peals of diabolical laughter and whooping.

The horseman's steed, mad with terror, dashed along the track, narrowly avoiding collisions with the gaunt boulders that stood in its way. The poor frightened hounds tried in vain to keep up with it. It had continued its mad career for some little distance when it swerved from the track, so abruptly that the horseman was almost unseated. He was wondering what had startled the animal, when the apparition that had entered the thicket suddenly emerged from behind a tree. The moonlight focusing on its face revealed the livid, horribly mutilated face of a corpse. A gruesome greenish-yellow light enveloped the entire body. The dreadful thing spread out its fleshless arms, and with a ghastly grin uttered a blood-curdling whoop. It then vanished.

The long reverberating echo of the cry had hardly ceased when a violent storm arose. The angry wind roared and howled among the trees, whose branches swayed and bent before the blasts. The thunder roared and the lightning flashed.

The horseman, drenched to the skin in the pouring rain, emerged from the Whooping Hollow feeling more dead than alive,[1] but extremely thankful to be free of ghosts and once again in the open country.

A GHOST EMBRACES

A STRANGE story of a man's ghastly experience in a mortuary was told me by an elderly physician when I was in Boston.

The body of a woman was found one night floating in a river,

[1] Vide *The Ladies' Cabinet*, 1836.

and was taken to the mortuary of a small New England town. It was placed on a table and covered with a sheet.

The night watchman was so accustomed to seeing corpses in various stages of decomposition that he did not mind sharing the room with them even in the dark. He leaned casually against the table on which this particular corpse had been deposited, and to while away the time he hummed a tune. When he had hummed it several times he began to think that the friend who had promised to pay him a visit was a long time coming. The night seemed unusually still, and he became more and more uneasy. He tried not to think of the dark swollen river and the corpse on the table behind him, too close to be pleasant. He had only given it a casual glance before covering it with the sheet, but he remembered now that there had been something rather disturbingly unusual about it. As it was a moonlit night the gas was low. He was about to turn it on higher when it suddenly went out. Thinking it very strange, as there was no draught, he struck a match and found the gas had been turned off.

Unable to explain how this could have happened, and somewhat perturbed, he lit the gas, and keeping it rather higher than it had been previously, he returned to his seat by the table. He had not been sitting long before the gas again went out, and something moved very softly and stealthily past him.

He was more than a little startled. His heart almost stopped beating, he felt sick and faint, and would have escaped from the building had he had the power to do so; but his strength had left him, and he felt, as one feels in a nightmare, all weighted down, weak and helpless, unable to move a limb. He would have shrieked, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

Presently his terror reached its climax. The footsteps crept nearer and nearer towards him. Something icily cold touched one of his hands and felt its way up his body to his throat. The something was behind him; it bent over him. He was in the arms of the corpse. Overtaxed nature gave way at last. He uttered a piercing shriek, and fell in a swoon upon the floor. In that condition he was found by his friend.

His experience might have been attributed to a nightmare or overheated imagination, had it not been for damp and slimy marks on his clothes and muddy footprints on the floor. The feet of the corpse, which had been in the river fully a week before it was brought to the mortuary, corresponded exactly to the footprints.

ELEMENTALS AND SEMI-PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

FANTASTIC AND DANGEROUS SPIRITS

THE folk-lore and ghost-lore of many countries contain accounts of phenomena that are an odd mixture of ghost and fairy. In Touraine there existed until comparatively recently a belief in brous. A brou is a phenomenon that is a human being during the daytime and a sheep during the night. It derives its name from the American term for a thicket, because brous are supposed to gallop all night through woods and thickets.

A man walking along a road in the near vicinity of St. Quentin one night found a small sheep that had apparently strayed from the flock and seemed to be lost. He picked the animal up, and was on his way home with it when it asked him in a human voice where he was taking it. He was so terrified that he dropped the brou, which at once turned into a woman, who bounded away, uttering peals of diabolical laughter. She proved to be a married woman whose home was in Liége. As soon as it was known that she was a brou she had to leave Liége. What subsequently became of her was never ascertained.

Brous were sometimes very distinctive. They ran over the country at night killing and devouring dogs, poultry and occasionally little children.

About the year 1832 a man who was suspected of being a dangerous brou was shot at St. Hippolyte, near Loches.

A young man named Charles Robin, a small farmer, on going into his garden one fine moonlight night saw a small sheep walking along a path. Directly he approached it, it bounded over a high wall and dashed into an adjacent forest, uttering the most unearthly laughter. Robin called his uncle, who ran into the garden and also heard the laughter, which clearly proved the sheep was a brou. Brous were said to laugh evilly when any attempt was made to capture or even to approach them.

A white phantom known as La Milloraine, or Demoiselle, was said to haunt Touraine. It was of enormous stature, and although of no definite form was believed to be feminine. It appeared in lonely places, and portended grievous trouble to whoever saw it.

A very unpleasant species of goblin was believed in the last century to haunt houses in Normandy. It played very troublesome and mischievous tricks, knocking at doors, moving furniture about,

pulling the bedclothes off people and making hideous faces at children. The most obnoxious and terrifying of these goblins was called 'La bête de St. Germain'.[1]

Belief in maras was more widespread than belief in brous, which was confined to Northern and Western France. A mara was a human being, generally a woman, in the daytime, and at night an evil spirit that tormented people and horses by sitting on them and making them have the most horrible nightmares. Credulity in these phenomena existed in Scandinavia up to the present century. The following is one of numerous recorded cases of maras in Jutland:

One evening some reapers in a village in Jutland found a naked woman lying under a hedge in a field. Considerably surprised, they regarded her very closely, and coming at length to the conclusion that her sleep was not natural they summoned a shepherd, who was generally regarded as very intelligent. On seeing the woman he said at once: "She is not a real woman although she seems like one. She is a mara, and has stripped for the purpose of riding someone tonight."

At this there were shouts of laughter, and one of the reapers said: "Tell us another, Christian. A mara indeed! If this person is not a real woman, our mothers are not real women."

"All right," Christian replied. "Wait and see."

Bending over her he whispered in her ear, whereupon a queer little creature came out of the grass, and running up to her disappeared in her mouth. Christian gave her a push. She rolled over three times, sprang to her feet, and with a wild, startled cry leaped over a high bush and vanished. The reapers hurried home, convinced that Christian had spoken the truth, and that the naked person really was a wicked mara.

Belief in black elves existed in Great Britain up to at least the 18th century. Among the people said to possess the rare faculty of seeing these phenomena was Ketel, a pious rustic who lived at Farnham in Yorkshire.

The historian William of Newbury relates the following anecdote about Ketel:

While but a lad Ketel was returning home one day from harvesting, riding on a wagon-horse, when suddenly, in a place perfectly level and smooth, the horse stumbled as though it had met with an obstacle, and Ketel was thrown to the ground. As he raised himself up he beheld two very small black elves, who were laughing most

[1] Vide *Chambers's Journal*, 1845, Vol. I, p. 195.

lustily at the trick that they had played upon him. From that hour was given to him the power of seeing elves wherever they might be, and whatever they might be doing, and he often saved people from their malice.

He assured those people who were fortunate enough to gain his confidence—for he did not tell these things to everybody—that there were some hobgoblins who were large and strong, and who were capable of doing much hurt to those who might fall into their power; but that others were very small and contemptible, incapable of doing much harm, and very stupid and foolish, but who delighted in tormenting and teasing mankind.

He said that he often saw them sitting by the roadside on the look-out for travellers, upon whom to play their tricks, and laughing in high glee when they could cause either them or their horses to stumble, particularly when the rider, irritated by his steed, spurred and beat it well after the accident.

Ketel, as might be supposed, drew upon himself, by his officiousness and by his power of seeing the elves and hobgoblins, the hatred of the whole of their fraternity.

The English chronicler, John of Brompton, tells of the capture of a black elf by the Abbot of a monastery, who kept it, clad in a monkish robe, in the monastery, until someone took the garment from it, when it vanished at once and was never seen again.

In his book *The Norse Folk, or A Visit to the Homes of Norway and Sweden*, Mr. Charles Loring Brace mentions some of the superstitions prevalent in those countries.

One of the superstitions is about trolls. Trolls are a very dangerous species of elves. According to Mr. Brace, they always dance on Christmas morning between cock-crowing and the break of day. In an old castle in the south of Sweden Mr. Brace was shown a drinking-horn and a little ivory whistle, which were alleged to have come into the possession of the family through a strange circumstance.

According to a traditionary story, there was once near the castle a boulder which was haunted every night by a number of trolls, who used to dance round it. The old lady who lived in the castle offered a large sum of money to anyone who would go to the boulder and find out if the rumours about the haunting were true.

At first no one ventured to go, but finally a young huntsman volunteered. Shortly before cock-crowing he rode to the boulder. When he drew near it he heard the sound of music and dancing and saw the boulder raised up on golden pillars and bright lights

underneath it. Round and under the boulder were a host of trolls dancing, singing and drinking. Their queen wore a diamond crown and had a little whistle in her hand. Seeing the huntsman she ran towards him and welcomed him. She was so beautiful that he fell violently in love with her, and was about to drink out of the horn, which one of her retainers handed to him, when someone, whom he could not see, told him in a low voice that if he drank any of the liquor in the horn he would straightway forget everything in his past life and become transformed for ever into a troll. He at once poured the contents of the horn on to the ground, snatched the whistle from the queen, and rode away. Some of the liquor in the horn fell on his horse and scorched its hide.

The trolls pursued him, cursing and shrieking. As he approached the castle he found the portcullis down, and the old lady and her retainers standing waiting for him. He knew that if he could get over the moat in front of the castle he would be safe, because witches and evil spirits could not cross water. Galloping furiously he reached the moat bridge just in time.

The trolls stood on the brink of the moat and begged the huntsman to give them back the horn and whistle. The queen of the trolls offered countless diamonds and heaps of gold for them, but the old lady of the castle refused to restore them. Thereupon the queen of the trolls said that if the old lady persisted in keeping the horn and whistle she must guard them very carefully, for should they be at any time removed from the castle, the castle would be burnt down.

The old lady said: "Begone, evil creatures. In the holy name, begone." Whereupon all the trolls vanished; but for years afterwards, even up to the time Mr. Brace visited the castle, the trolls were believed to haunt it. The horn and whistle were removed from the castle three times, and on each occasion the castle was burned down. The family that owned it finally died out, and their successors kept the horn and whistle in the glass case in which Mr. Brace saw them.

A noble family in Sweden, the Trolls, derive their name from the daring deed of one of their ancestors, who sliced off the head of a troll queen who offered him magic drink in her horn. This horn was long preserved in a Swedish cathedral.

Troll queens invariably lured men whom they could not charm to violent and painful deaths.

Mr. Brace states that when he was in Sweden he was frequently

summoned to see or hear the spokeri. They were evil spirits who fought and threw things at one another. They sometimes attacked and scared to death horses and cattle. The spokeri are as hideous as they are evil. They have the heads of skeletons and scaly, bloated bodies. Belief in them still exists in parts of Sweden and other Scandinavian countries.

THE SHAPELESS HORROR NEAR BRAEMAR

JOHN GRANT in his *Legends of the Braes O'Mar* says Creag-an-Aibhse, or the Rock of the Ghost, near Braemar, was haunted for many years by a black, loathsome, shapeless, monstrous, wholly evil spirit, which used to hurl stones at anyone who tried to ascend the rocky hill. The cries and yells which it uttered were so dreadful that all who heard them were terrified. No one in Braemar dared to pass near the hill after nightfall. The dread of the monster was so great that the people of Braemar besought John Avignon, who, on account of his diminutive stature, was known as the Sagart Beag, or the Little Priest, .to lay it.

He climbed boldly, unmolested, to the top of Creag-an-Aibhse and said mass, and thenceforth the haunting ceased. The horrible spirit that had for so long haunted the rocky hill and caused such widespread terror was never seen or heard again.

John Grant in the same book mentions the Witch of Glengairm, the Thunderbolt Carline, or the Cailleach-Bheathrach.

Before she became a witch she was a young and happy wife. Her husband and seven of her sons were killed in a battle. Her only remaining boy was deformed. After her losses she seems to have devoted herself to prophecy and witchcraft, in both of which she acquired considerable notoriety. Beyond vainly attempting through her magical powers to change the course of the River Don, with the idea of making it flow through Morven instead of through Strathdon and Strathdee, she never seems to have striven after anything at all mischievous or harmful. Yet people held her in awe and declared that a copse near her house was haunted by evil spirits that wrought great mischief.

The ruins of her home, which was also said to be haunted, were to be seen as recently as the middle of the last century, possibly even later.

THE MONSTER OF THE MORAR MOUND

J. G. CAMPBELL gives the following account of a murderous semi-human, semi-spirit phenomenon in his book *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*:[1]

On the shore and forming part of the boundary between North and South Morar, on the west coast of Inverness, is a large, rocky mound, which for many years was very badly haunted. The few people who ventured near it alone after nightfall were invariably found dead and shockingly mangled in the morning.

Living in South Morar not far from the haunted mound was a man named Macdonail, whose son and heir was a strong, courageous youth of eighteen years of age.

One evening Macdonail was visited unexpectedly by a man of considerable importance in the south-west of Scotland.

It so happened that just then there was no one in the neighbourhood of South Morar who could help Macdonail entertain so distinguished a guest, so he told his son to go to Bracara and invite certain of his friends there to stay with him for a day or two. He strictly enjoined his son not to return alone that night for fear of the ghost.

The young man set out on his mission at once. He passed the haunted mound, which was on the road to Bracara, without molestation and arrived safely at his destination. The people whom he was instructed to invite were unfortunately unable to return with him, and as he could find no one else willing to accompany him, he was obliged to start on his homeward journey alone.

Early in the morning his dead body was found close to the haunted mound, horribly mutilated. Around it were traces of a desperate struggle. When Macdonail learned about his son's death he swore that he would avenge him.

Regardless of the warnings of his friends and relatives, he went alone one night to the haunted mound. He had not been there long before he saw a tall, naked, hairy, headless figure that came out from behind a rock and said: "You have come to take your son's ransom. Be wise and go home."[2]

[1] Belief in phenomena of this kind existed in some parts of Scotland until comparatively recently.

[2] It is difficult to understand how a man without a head could speak; possibly the head was there but Macdonail, for some peculiar reason, was unable to see it. Apparently his psychic vision had limitations.

Macdonail in response seized the apparition, and a furious struggle ensued. After it had gone on for a few minutes Macdonail managed to draw his dirk, and he was about to use it, when his opponent cried, "Hold your hand, MacCuil,[1] touch me not with iron, and while there is one within the twentieth degree related to you, I will not be seen again."

Macdonail stayed his hand and found he was grasping air; his sanguinary opponent had suddenly and inexplicably vanished. His account of his extraordinary combat was widely credited not only in the neighbourhood of its alleged occurrence but throughout Ayr.

Mr. Campbell says that shortly before he wrote his book belief in the haunting even yet prevailed, and that people attributed its non-recurrence to the fact that some of Macdonail's relatives were still living.

Another wild traditional story, in which there is a jumble of the physical with the ghostly, is associated with the house and grounds of Balconie in Cromarty.[2]

In close proximity to the grounds of Balconie House there is a deep and narrow gorge, through which the River Auldgrande pursues a winding, rocky course. Owing to its savage, gloomy character and rumours of strange, unaccountable happenings on the banks of the river and the bridge over it, the gorge has long borne a sinister reputation.

Writing about the gorge in his statistical account of the parish of Balconie, Dr. Robertson says:

> "The observer, if he can look on the gulf below without any uneasy sensation, will be gratified by a view equally awful and astonishing. The wildness of the steep and rugged rocks; the gloomy horror of the cliffs and caverns, inaccessible to mortal tread, and where the genial rays of the sun never yet penetrated; the waterfalls, which are heard pouring down in different places of the precipice, with sounds various in proportion to their distances; the hoarse and hollow murmuring of the river, which runs at the depth of one hundred and thirty feet below the surface of the earth; the fine groves of pines, which majestically climb the sides of the beautiful eminence that rises immediately

[1] The name by which he was also known.

[2] *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland*, by Hugh Miller, and *Picturesque Scotland*, by F. Watt, M.A., and the Rev. A. Carter, M.A.

from the brink of the chasm; all these objects cannot be contemplated without exciting emotions of wonder and admiration in the mind of every beholder."

The traditional story is as follows: About the middle of the 17th century the Laird of Balconie returned home from a rather long absence with a beautiful young wife. She was singularly reserved and never alluded to her family or her pre-marriage days. She shunned society and used to ramble in places where there was little likelihood of her encountering anyone. The Gorge of the Auldgrande seemed to have a great attraction for her; it was in its immediate vicinity that she spent hours every day.

A sudden change came over her. She grew less reserved and much more sociable, no longer shunning all her husband's acquaintances; but there was a mysterious wildness about her which inspired everyone who came in contact with her with a feeling of fear and apprehension. She seemed to be a creature of another world, not wholly human.

One evening she set out to the gorge accompanied by one of her maids, a pretty, simple Highland girl to whom she had become curiously attached. It was dusk when they reached the gorge. The only sound that they could hear was the murmuring of the distant river.

"Let us approach nearer the edge," said the lady, speaking for the first time since she had left the house.

"No, no, not any nearer, madam," the girl cried. "The gully is haunted. Strange lights and shapes have been seen in it after nightfall."

"Pshaw!" the lady exclaimed. "How can you believe such stories? Come with me. I will show you a path which leads right down to the river." She seized the girl and dragged her, despite her struggles, towards the edge of the chasm. "You must come with me," she screamed, "there is no escape for you."

"Suffer me, lady, to accompany you," a strong, masculine voice said. "Your surety, madam, must be a willing one."

A dark man in green suddenly appeared by the side of the lady, who immediately removed her hands from the girl and, with an expression of passive despair, allowed the stranger to lead her to the brink of the gorge. She turned round on reaching the precipice and taking a bunch of household keys from her belt threw them to the maid. The keys struck a granite boulder and left on it an impression which is there to this day.

THE HORROR OF THE POOL

As I HAVE already remarked there are many traditions and stories of ghostly happenings associated with my branch of the old O'Donnells and my grandmother's family, the Vizes of Cork and Limerick. There are also many stories of the supernatural associated with my O'Brien and Maunsell forebears.

My father, who collected many of these stories, and was deeply interested in ghost-lore, contacted the supernatural himself on more than one occasion.

The adventure I am about to relate occurred while my father was an undergraduate at T.C.D. He arranged one long vacation to go on a walking tour in the west of Ireland with his friend Bob Hunt, of Limerick. As Hunt was unexpectedly detained my father set off alone.

He came one day, after a long tramp through a wild and barren country, to a wayside pool. My father did not excel in games but he was a good swimmer. Feeling very hot and sticky, for the day was very close, he decided to bathe. The road was lonely and little frequented; there were no motorists in those days. He took off his clothes and plunged into the pool. He was surprised to find that, despite the heat, the water was extremely cold. The blazing sun-rays did not appear to affect the temperature. A few rapid strokes took him to the far side of the pool. He was preparing to turn about when he fancied he was no longer alone in the pool, that some horrible thing was getting ready to seize him. He scrambled out of the water in a panic. Seeing nothing to account for his alarm, he laughed, and blamed himself for being so easily frightened. He leaped into the pool again, and was about half-way across it when he experienced the same sensation, only in an even more terrifying degree. He struck out wildly for the shore, expecting every moment to feel clammy arms or tentacles clutch hold of him. He put on his clothes, without drying himself properly, and did not feel safe until he was out of sight of the pool.

He did not see it again for several years. In the meanwhile much had happened in his life. He had graduated at T.C.D., and at the earnest desire of his mother had resigned a commission in the Army and taken Holy Orders. He was visiting his mother in Limerick when he felt an urge to see once again the pool of horror by the

lonely roadside. He went there accompanied by one of his Limerick friends. They were gazing at the still, dark water, when they were joined by a stranger who told them that he owned a house within a short distance of the pool. My father had not noticed the house until the stranger pointed it out to him. "It is surely new," my father exclaimed; "I can't remember seeing it when I was here a few years ago."

"It was built exactly three years ago," the stranger said. "I bought it, and now I am anxious to sell it. This pool seems to interest you. You are not thinking of bathing in it, are you?"

My father shook his head. "No! Once was quite enough." He told the stranger what had happened when he was last there. "It was just my imagination, of course," he said.

"I don't think so," the stranger remarked. "Do you believe in the supernatural? You should do, as you are a clergyman. At least I take you for one in those clothes."

"I am a clergyman, and I do believe in the supernatural," my father said. "Are you trying to tell me that this pool is haunted?"

"Can you spare a few minutes?" the stranger asked. "What I have to say won't take very long."

My father and his friend said they would be very interested to listen to anything that he had to tell them about the pool.

"I am a widower," the stranger began. "My two nieces live with me, and I have an old woman, who cooks and does various other things.

"I was the first occupant of the house yonder, and while I lived in it hardly a night passed without something very disturbing happening. We all had terrifying dreams and were awakened by queer noises—creakings, the rattling of door handles, the soft, padding footsteps on the stairs, and even in our rooms. One night my youngest niece felt her bed rise up and down, as if there was someone under it trying to frighten her. I heard her scream and ran to her room at once. I found her unconscious. She had fainted, and was quite alone in the room. A few nights later I had a similar experience. I sprang out of bed, lit a candle, and searched the house. There was no one in it but our four selves. The doors, front and back, were locked and bolted; the windows on the ground floor were latched and shuttered. No one from outside had entered. There was only one satisfactory explanation, namely the supernatural.

"Weeks passed, and then one night the cook screamed. I ran to

her room, and found her terrified. She declared that something spongy and clammy had crawled on to the bed and tried to smother her.

"I had the greatest difficulty in pacifying her. She expressed the odd belief that the thing that was haunting the house and frightening us so much came from the pool. She is a native of Kerry, and like so many of the Munster people is a firm believer in phockas, leprechauns and spirits of all kinds.

"Neither I nor my nieces had ever liked this pool. We felt that there was something very unpleasant about it, and fond as we were of swimming, we had never cared to bathe in it. I hope I am not boring you."

My father and his friend told him that they were very interested and wanted him to continue.

"Well, one night," he said, "I kept watch outside the house, and at about half past one o'clock I saw a shadowy figure approach the house from the direction of the pool. It gave me the impression of something pulpy and loathsome without any definite shape. I moved hastily out of the way and saw it enter the house. A few minutes later I heard screams, and found one of my nieces half mad with terror. She said she heard the bedroom door open and something cold and slimy touched her cheek and forehead. That settled me. Convinced that the house was haunted by something evil and harmful, I shut it up and rented a cottage about a mile and a half from here. I go to the house once or twice a week to air it, but never at night."

"Have you any idea why this pool should be haunted?" my father asked.

"No," he replied. "I have been told that pools and lakes in lonely localities sometimes attract a species of spirit that is particularly terrifying and dangerous. More I cannot say. The whys and wherefores of the supernatural are quite beyond our ken, and will probably ever remain so."

SOME NORTH-COUNTRY HAUNTINGS

LANCASHIRE abounds in traditionary stories and legends, many of which are about boggarts. A house near Rochdale was for many years haunted by a boggart that used to terrify people by crawling into their rooms during the night, putting a clammy hand on their

faces and stripping the bedclothes off them. The house in consequence of its molestations was often vacated.[1]

Clayton Hall is said to have been once haunted by a boggart that was also in the habit of depriving people of their bedclothes, which it hid in places where they were least likely to find them. It was finally laid by a priest.

A boggart that haunted a farm near Blackburn used to scare the farmer's wife by snatching her baby from under her nose. It carried the screaming brat to the kitchen and deposited it none too gently on the hearthstone, to the surprise and indignation of the cook.

A cottage not very far from the farm was haunted by a boggart that frightened the sole occupant, an old woman, by shaking her, pulling her ears, thumping on a chest and gnashing its hideous, long, yellow teeth.

The Troller's Gill, a wild, lonely ravine that intersects the bleak moorlands forming the watershed between the waters of the tributaries of the Wharfe and Nidd, is haunted by a bargest in the form of a huge dog with shaggy hair and glaring eyes. A weird light surrounds it. Its advent is generally regarded as a portent of extreme misfortune to whoever sees it.

A farm servant was threading his way through the gill late one evening when the bargest emerged from behind a large boulder. The servant muttered a prayer and crossed himself. The bargest howled and vanished. The servant, who was terrified, hurried to his destination, and when he arrived there found his wife seriously ill. The following day his mother died suddenly and his only child met with a bad accident.

An account of a bargest that haunted the vicinity of Rylston in Midderdale was published in the supplement of the *Leeds Mercury* in February, 1881.

A man named Billy ——[2] was returning home late one night from Grassington when he heard the clanking of a chain, a sure sign of the near proximity of a bargest. He glanced apprehensively around him and saw a bargest a little distance ahead of him. It was dragging the chain, which was attached to the collar round its neck, over the rugged ground as it moved. It was going in the direction of his home, and he followed it. It disappeared suddenly. When he reached his house it was sitting in front of the garden gate. It bared its long pointed teeth and glared savagely at him.

[1] Vide *Lancashire Folk-lore*, by J. Harland and T. Wilkinson.
[2] No surname given.

It was preparing to rush at him, when his wife came out of the house and threw a horse-shoe at it. The horse-shoe passed right through it. The bargest sank into the ground and disappeared. Horse-shoes are deemed to be a protection against bargests and boggarts, and that is one reason why in certain parts of the North of England they are so often hung on gates and doors.

HOMICIDAL GHOSTS

ONE of the strangest cases of spirits doing actual physical harm is recorded in a pamphlet published in 1662.[1]

Mr. John Luck, a farmer of Raveley, set out on horseback one morning to the annual fair at Whittlesea. On the way he met a friend, with whom he had a drink at a wayside inn. After drinking somewhat heavily Mr. Luck became very merry, and perceiving that his friend was getting restless and desirous of continuing on his way to the fair, he said, "Let the devil take him who goeth out of this house today."

The more he drank, the merrier he grew. Forgetful of his rash saying, he called for his horse and set out for the fair. The fresh air seemed to have a sobering effect, for he had not travelled very far before he remembered what he had said. He was naturally superstitious and became so perturbed that he lost his bearings. He was endeavouring to find the way home—it was getting dusk and far too late to go to the fair—when he espied 'two grim creatures before him in the likeness of griffins'.

They handled him roughly, took him up in the air, stripped him, and then dropped him, a sad spectacle, all gory, in a farmyard just outside the town of Doddington. There he was found lying upon some harrows. He was picked up and carried to a house, which belonged to a neighbouring gentleman. When he had recovered sufficiently to talk, he related what had happened to him. Before very long he 'grew into a frenzy', so desperate that the inmates of the house were afraid to stay in the room with him.

Convinced that Luck was under evil influence, they sent for the clergyman of the town. No sooner had the clergyman entered the house than Luck, howling like a demon, rushed at him and would have torn him to pieces, had not the servants of the house

[1] Vide *A Strange and True Relation of One Mr. John Luck*, 1662, and *Legends and Traditions of Huntingdonshire*, by W. H. B. Saunders.

come to his rescue. They succeeded with great difficulty in overcoming Luck and tying him to the bed. No one was allowed to enter his room, the door of which was locked.

The next morning he was found lying on the bed with his neck broken, his tongue out of his mouth, his body black as a shoe, all swelled, every bone out of joint, and an expression of the greatest horror in his eyes. Those who viewed his dead body, and knew what he had said at the inn about the Devil, expressed their conviction that he had met his death at the hands of Satan's fiends.

A very unpleasant case of haunting, also by something very evil, was reported in the *Weekly Budget*.[1]

A young man residing at a boarding house in a town in the United States of America began suddenly to grow very pale and thin. He awoke every morning to find a curious puncture on one of his arms, from which blood had apparently been drawn. Considerably puzzled as to the cause of the puncture, he lay awake one night, and when he felt something cold press against one of his arms and bite him, he lit a candle at once. Although he searched everywhere in the room, he could not find anything to account for the bite. Blood was oozing from the wound.

The following night the same thing happened. This time he sensed a presence in the room, but when he lit the candle he saw nothing. He felt such a horror of the room that he left the house and moved elsewhere. Other people who occupied the room after he left had similar experiences. The house in consequence obtained an evil reputation.

People who lived in the town believed that it was haunted by a vampire, that is to say by the accursed body of some former dweller in the house, who could not find rest in the neighbouring cemetery but nightly left the grave to suck the blood of anyone who slept in the room which it had occupied when alive.

When I was ranching in the Far West of the United States I stayed one night in the cabin of a man named Trench, who lived in the heart of a vast forest in the region of the Cascade Mountains. He lived quite alone. There was no human habitation near him.

He told me that he often heard strange unaccountable noises, and that one night, when he could not sleep, he saw a tall, luminous, green figure standing in the doorway of the cabin. It was quite nude, with long arms and legs and a long white face, with no nose, mouth or ears—only long, glittering, evil eyes. Trench tried to reach his

[1] July 13, 1867.

gun, which was on the floor near the bed, but he was temporarily paralysed, and in that state, unable to move a limb or utter a sound, he watched the figure enter the cabin and bend over his dog, which was lying in a corner of the room.

The dog gave a yelp of pain and terror. The sound it made freed Trench from the spell which bound him. He got hold of his gun and fired at the figure. The bullet seemed to pass right through it. The figure vanished. When Trench looked at his dog it was lying crumpled up with its neck broken.

I told Trench about an experience that I had one night in the forest. I was returning home on horseback from Crater Lake, at that time seldom visited except by Indians from the neighbouring reservation territory. Every now and then I heard coyotes in the distance. There is no mistaking the canine bark that ends in an unmistakable lupine howl. I had to dismount once, in order to kill a rattlesnake that seemed inclined to dispute the right of way with me.

Soon after this little diversion I came to a clearing in the forest, through which the track wound a sinuous course. Some little distance ahead of me was a solitary tree on a bare piece of ground that skirted the track. There was something very sinister in the appearance of the tree. It was quite naked and looked as if it had been blasted.

"And your horse would not go near it," Trench exclaimed.

"You are quite right," I said. "It stood stock still and trembled, as if it had the ague."

"I know the tree," Trench observed. "No animal will go near it. It is called the Tree of Death because so many people have been found dead under it. The Indians say it is haunted by a spirit with the trunk of a woman and the head of a coyote, that lures people to the tree and either induces them to commit suicide or murders them."

He asked if I had ever heard of a phantom tree. I said that I had heard of phantom trees in Europe, Asia and Africa, but not in America. He told me that there was one in the forest, that the Rogue River Indians called it the Devil Tree, and that whoever saw it always met with grave misfortune afterwards.

I told him that I hoped I should never see the Devil Tree, as I considered that I had had more than my share of misfortune.

VERY UNUSUAL HAUNTINGS

HERR VON BACZKO, in his autobiography,[1] states how he was haunted for some considerable time by a very aggressive ghost. He was engaged one evening, soon after the battle of Jena, in translating a pamphlet into Polish, when he felt a vigorous poke in his loins. He looked round and saw a negro boy of about twelve years of age. There was no one else in the room, the door of which was shut. Had anyone entered he must have heard him.

Realizing that the intruder was a phantom he struck at it, but with no apparent effect. The apparition attacked him again and gave his left arm a particularly painful twist. He finally succeeded in driving it away. It continued to visit him constantly during four months, and on each occasion assaulted him, striking and punching him. By degrees its visits became more and more rare, until it finally appeared not in the form of a negro boy but in that of a tall, brown figure, with the head of an owl.

The strange experience of a youth named Billing is recorded in the same book.

The well-known German writer, Herr Pfeffel, lived in a house near Colmar. In the rear of the house was a very lovely old-world garden that had a peculiar attraction for young Billing, who constantly visited Herr Pfeffel. When the weather was fine they strolled around the garden, and on each of these occasions Herr Pfeffel, who was blind, took the arm of Billing. Pfeffel noticed one evening that on passing over a certain spot Billing started violently, as if he had received an electric shock. He asked Billing the reason, and Billing said that there was no reason, that he was not aware he had started. On going over the same spot again, the same thing occurred. Billing, being pressed to explain the cause of his apparent alarm, declared that it arose from a horrible sensation which he always experienced when in the vicinity of human remains, that it was his impression that a human body was buried in that particular spot.

He asked Pfeffel to visit the spot with him during the night, and said that he thought it highly probable that he would then be able to tell if his surmise was correct. Accordingly, they went

[1] *Popular Superstitions*, by H. Mayo.

together to the garden about midnight. As they approached the spot Billing observed a faint light over it.

At about ten paces from it he halted, and would not proceed any further. He declared that he saw, hovering over the spot, a luminous female figure, nearly five feet in height, with her right arm folded over her breast, her left arm hanging by her side. Pfeffel stepped forward and placed himself on the haunted spot. The figure at once began to move about. It appeared first on the right side of Pfeffel, then on his left side, now behind him, now in front of him. When Pfeffel struck at it, his stick went right through it. They visited the spot the next night with some of Pfeffel's friends. The same thing occurred.

Unknown to Billing Pfeffel had the ground dug up. At a depth of several feet, beneath a layer of quicklime, the remains of a woman, in an advanced stage of decomposition, were found. They were removed, and the earth carefully replaced.

Three days later Billing, who was suffering from severe shock and had not been told about the finding of the remains, was induced, not without difficulty, to visit the spot again, accompanied as hitherto by Pfeffel. This time he walked over it without starting or receiving any horrible impression. The haunting had ceased.

No suspicion regarding the remains appears to have been attached to Pfeffel, presumably because he had not occupied the house for more than a few months. But his conduct seems to have been somewhat extraordinary.

TERRIFYING PHENOMENA

FEARSOME HEADS

I AM concluding this volume with hauntings by phantom heads which are often very terrifying and sometimes diabolical.

In the Christmas Number of the *Review of Reviews*, published in the early nineties of the last century, there is an interesting account of a phantom head. A lady was searching for something on the landing of her house at Brockley one Saturday evening, when she raised her eyes and saw to her astonishment a peculiar light on the staircase above her. It developed very quickly into a head, crowned with thick, matted light hair. It was surrounded with a gruesome greenish-yellow light. The face was wide and broad, with green eyes, the expression of which was diabolically malignant.

The lady felt that such an awful thing could only be satanic. Endeavouring to be calm she fixed her gaze on it and said, "In the name of Christ be gone"; whereupon the apparition at once vanished. She never saw it again.

She could not imagine why such a horrible apparition should visit her home. The house was a very ordinary London suburban villa. It was not old, and no tragedy was known to have occurred in it. The previous occupants of the house had been seemingly quiet, very ordinary people. Apparently the head was not the portent of any very serious happening, but its intention was doubtless harmful, and had it been able to remain in the house it might have fulfilled its evil design.

An old country house in Hertfordshire was haunted by two satanic phantom heads, until a Roman Catholic priest successfully exorcized them.

Phantom heads not infrequently haunt certain families and seem to take a fiendish delight in warning them of some approaching calamity. An Italian lady, whom I met in New York in 1934, told me that her family was haunted by a malignant phantom head that always appeared before the death of one of her relatives.

She said her brother saw it the night her mother died, and that she and her twin sister saw it before the death of her father. She and her sister slept in the same room. They were awakened simultaneously one night by a curious noise in the cupboard facing their beds. They sat up, and one of them was about to get out of bed to see if their cat was in the room, when the cupboard door

suddenly opened and a luminous head appeared. It was covered with matted black hair and looked in an advanced stage of decomposition. Its pale, oblique eyes gleamed exultingly as they met the gaze of the terrified sisters, and its hideous, fleshless mouth grinned, revealing jagged, badly decayed teeth. Directly the sisters murmured prayers and crossed themselves, the head vanished.

The following day they learned that their father, who was away from home, had died suddenly, at about the time that they had seen the head.

Clotilde, the little daughter of the unfortunate Queen of Etruria, or Tuscany, who was dispossessed of her kingdom by the first Napoleon and held in captivity at Nice, was for a brief time haunted by a phantom head.[1] Her mother, fearful of what Napoleon might be planning to do to her and her children, despatched two faithful members of her suite to Holland, for the purpose of arranging preliminaries for her and her family's secret flight to England.

> "On the night of the 15th of April, 1811, the ex-Queen was lying awake in her large, gloomy bedroom at Nice, when she saw the door slowly open, and Chipanti, the most trusted of her two absent agents, entered the apartment. He halted within a pace or two of the bed, and the Queen noticed that he was pale as death. For a full minute the dead and the living gazed upon each other; then, as the Queen forced her lips to pronounce his name, the apparition vanished. She knew then that her faithful servant was no more. Clotilde slept in a little room adjoining her apartment.
>
> "At breakfast the next morning, Clotilde appeared ill and out of spirits. With difficulty her mother prevailed upon her to explain the cause, when, with a burst of tears, she declared that Chipanti had kept her awake the whole night by perpetually thrusting his head into the room, and that from his strange wild look and white face she was certain that he must be seriously ill or mad."

She was very terrified. The Queen soon afterwards learned that Chipanti had been arrested while on his way to Holland, and executed at about the time she had seen his apparition.

Robert Hunt, in *Popular Romances of the West of England*, relates a haunting by half a face. A man named Berryman rented a house in the neighbourhood of Lelant. His son, James, said that when he was in bed at night he often saw 'half a man's face', enveloped in

[1] Vide *Strange Things Among Us*, by H. Spicer.

a gruesome light, enter the room, stop for a few moments at the foot of his bed, and then vanish. He was always terrified. Immediately before it appeared the cat, which slept in the room, always jumped on to the bed and tried to hide itself under the clothes. James said his father never admitted that he saw the apparition, but seemed very glad when he relinquished his tenancy of the house.

Phantom heads lacking features seem to be fairly common. The phantom of a woman with no eyes haunted Barton Hall in Somerset and terrified two sisters who saw it.[1] The famous Brown Lady Phantom of Raiuham also lacked eyes.[2] One of the ghosts that haunted a house near the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Birmingham had no features. Its face was a complete blank.[3]

Leap Castle, in Ireland, was for many years reputed to be badly haunted. One of the ghosts resembled a little old man in green clothes; the other ghost, which was also small, had a featureless face and was covered with something resembling wool. It haunted a gallery in the castle and terrified people by creeping noiselessly up to them and suddenly putting clammy hands, that had no fingers, on their shoulders. One lady was very ill for months after she saw it. The haunting, which ceased more than fifty years ago, was said to be due to certain dark deeds perpetrated in the castle by an ancient Irish chieftain, who for his many evil deeds was doomed to haunt the castle for seven centuries.

One of the most ghastly accounts of a complex haunt, in which one of the phenomena was a terrible head, was published in the San Francisco *Examiner* in 1891.

A farmer named Walsingham rented a house in Oakville. Shortly after he had moved into it the whole household was disturbed at night by the banging of doors, ringing of bells, and howling of the farmer's dog, a big, intelligent mastiff. Mr. Walsingham went downstairs to see what was happening, and found the dog in the hall, whining and barking. It leaped furiously at some invisible presence, and fell back, as if flung by powerful hands. It lay huddled upon the ground, and when Mr. Walsingham examined it he found its neck had been broken. The noises occurred night after night, and in addition to those mentioned there were shouts, groans, piteous cries and hideous laughter.

One evening Miss Alice Walsingham was arranging her hair

[1] Vide *All the Year Round*, 1868.
[2] *Haunted Homes of England*, by John Ingram.
[3] *Sights and Shadows*, by F. G. Lee, D.D.

in front of the dressing-table mirror, when she felt a hand grip her shoulder. Thinking that it was her father, she turned quickly round. No one was there, but when she looked at the mirror she saw in it the reflection of a great, ugly hand on her arm. She screamed, and the hand vanished.

Mr. Walsingham was in the garden one day and saw footprints of some invisible being form beside his own on the soft soil.

One night, while the family were having supper, blood dripped from the ceiling on to the table, and they all heard the most diabolical noises in the room immediately above them. When they went to the room the noises ceased at once, and there was nothing visible to account for them. The Walsinghams left the house the next day. After they left people passing by the house after nightfall heard shouting, yelling and groaning, and saw gruesome lights in the windows.

A man named Horace Gunn, of Savannah, spent a night in the house, and was found in the morning by his friends, lying on the floor in a swoon. He was taken home by them and was ill for days. He said that when he entered the house and tried to light a lamp in one of the rooms, the icy breath of some unseen presence blew it out, and he had to remain in the dark. After he had been there for some time he heard shouts of rage, yells of pain, and feet racing up the stairs and all over the house, as if one person was chasing another. When the chase ended there were screams of agony and much groaning and moaning, succeeded by peals of fiendish laughter. After these sounds ceased there was a long silence.

He was thinking that the haunting was over for the night when he saw a spherical, eerie light in the room. It developed very gradually into a head with long, grey, matted hair. There were bloodstains on the forehead. The eyes, which were wide open, gleamed with an unearthly evil light as they gazed at Mr. Gunn, who was too appalled to move or utter a sound. The head floated in the air, about five feet six inches above the floor. There was no sign of any body. Directly the noises recommenced, with greater violence than before, the head vanished.

Mr. Gunn made for the front door at once, and had nearly reached it when he was thrown down. Icy hands gripped his throat, and he lost consciousness. He was in that state when his friends came to the house. The marks of bony fingers, with long nails, were visible on his throat for several days after his harrowing experience.

The house had by this time acquired such an evil reputation that no one would occupy it, and it was ultimately demolished.

Many human bones were found under it and in its grounds. How they came there was never known, but it was supposed that they had lain there for many years, and were the bones of people who might have been murdered when the house was a roadside inn of very bad repute.

THE DEATH'S-HEAD OF MARY KING'S CLOSE

George Sinclair, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, and afterwards Minister of Eastwood in Renfrewshire, relates ghostly happenings of the most horrible kind in his book *Satan's Invisible World Discovered.*

Some of the phenomena were in the house of Mr. Coltheart, a law agent, in Mary King's Close, Edinburgh. Mr. Coltheart, finding that the house he was occupying in Edinburgh was rather too small for his family and rapidly increasing business, moved to a much larger and more imposing residence in Mary King's Close. He was warned that the house was haunted, but not believing in ghosts he ridiculed the idea. His maid-servant upon hearing what was rumoured about the house would not stay in it. Consequently Mr. and Mrs. Coltheart were obliged to manage as best they could without her.

One Sunday afternoon Mrs. Coltheart was seated in her room, reading the Bible, when something making her look up from the book she saw, suspended in the air immediately above her, the head of an old man with a long grey beard. The head was surrounded with a gruesome light, and the eyes gleamed so horribly that she fainted. That night Mr. Coltheart awoke and saw the same head floating in mid-air. It glared at him with its horrible, leering eyes. He knelt down and prayed. Presently the head was joined by the head of a child, and then by an arm, the extended, long, curled fingers of which seemed to want to grip hold of him.

Mr. Coltheart and his wife spoke to the apparitions and asked them why they haunted the house. There was no response. After a few minutes the ghost of a dog appeared in the room and curled itself up on a chair. More ghosts came, and some of them were so monstrous and evil that the Colthearts hid under the bedclothes. Suddenly there was a loud, awful groan, and all the ghosts vanished.

After such a terrifying experience one would suppose that the Colthearts would have got out of the house with the utmost speed,

but such was not the case. The brave couple continued to live in the house for many years, and were never again troubled by the ghosts.

About the time of Mr. Coltheart's death, a strange thing occurred. A client of his who lived at Tranent, about ten miles from Edinburgh, was aroused during the night by a nurse, who told him that there was something like a cloud moving about in the room. He got up at once, seized a sword, and saw the face and form of Thomas Coltheart confronting him. "Are you dead?" he asked. "What is your errand?" The apparition shook its head solemnly and faded away very gradually. Mr. Coltheart's client proceeded at once to the law agent's house, and on arriving there learned that Mr. Coltheart was dead.

A PHANTOM SKULL HAUNTING

THERE are many stories of weird happenings in connection with skulls. One of them is about an old farmstead near Bridport, in Dorsetshire, that for many years contained the skull of a man who was supposed to have been the negro servant of a Roman Catholic priest. A murder is alleged to have taken place in or near the farmstead; either the priest murdered the negro, in order to conceal some crime known to the negro, or the negro, for some unknown reason, murdered the priest. Just before he died the negro declared that his spirit would never rest unless his body was taken to his native land and buried there. As this could not be done he was buried in the churchyard of Bettiscombe.

The night after the funeral and for many succeeding nights terrible screams were heard by people living in close proximity to the churchyard. In the farmhouse doors and windows rattled, stairs and boards in bedrooms creaked dismally, and uncanny sounds were heard all over the building.

There was no cessation of the disturbances until the body was removed from the churchyard and brought back to the farmhouse. Every time it was reinterred the nocturnal disturbances were renewed; and this went on until nothing remained of the body except the skull, and every time the skull was moved from the house the same thing happened; so it was finally decided to provide a permanent resting-place for the skull in the farmhouse. This was done, and so far as is known there were never any further recurrences of the ghostly disturbances.

psychical researchers do not regard individual testimony as evidential unless it is corroborated.

Yet the testimony of a single individual may be of greater reliability and value than that of a number of people.

Who is better qualified to speak authoritatively about ghostly phenomena than the person who has actually experienced them? He alone knows the effect that such phenomena have on the sensorium, an effect which nothing natural could produce. The contents of this volume unavoidably varies very much as regards quality and evidential value, but it may be said that in all of them there is a factual foundation.

WITCHCRAFT AND BLACK MAGIC

Montague Summers

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